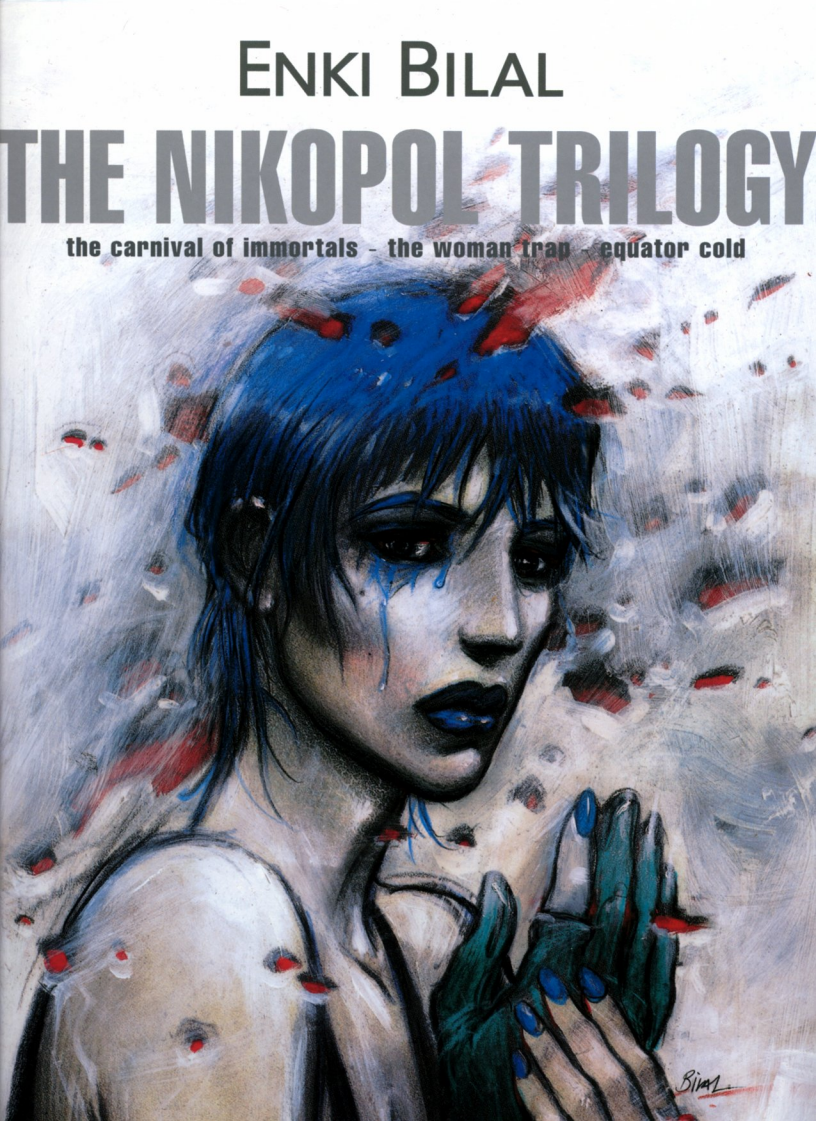
ENKI BILAL

THE NIKOPOL TRILOGY

the carnival of immortals - the woman trap - equator cold



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HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING

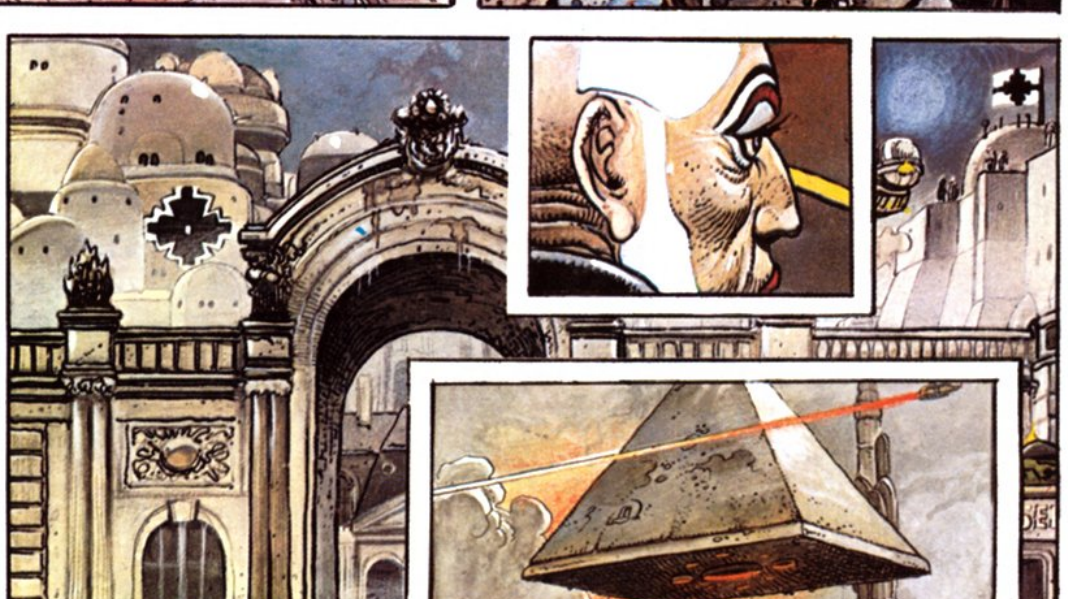
THE NIKOPOL TRILOGY

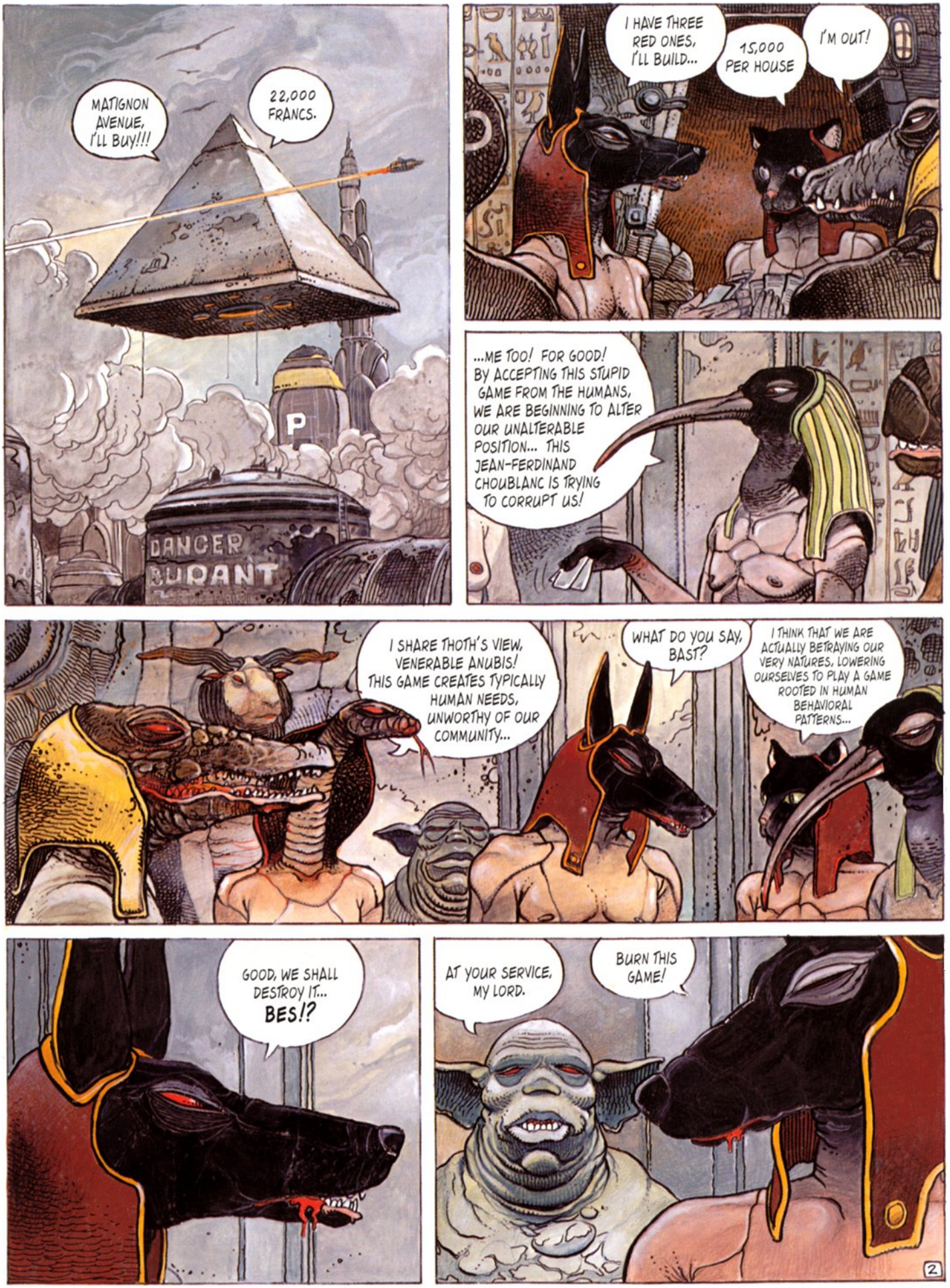
the carnival of immortals

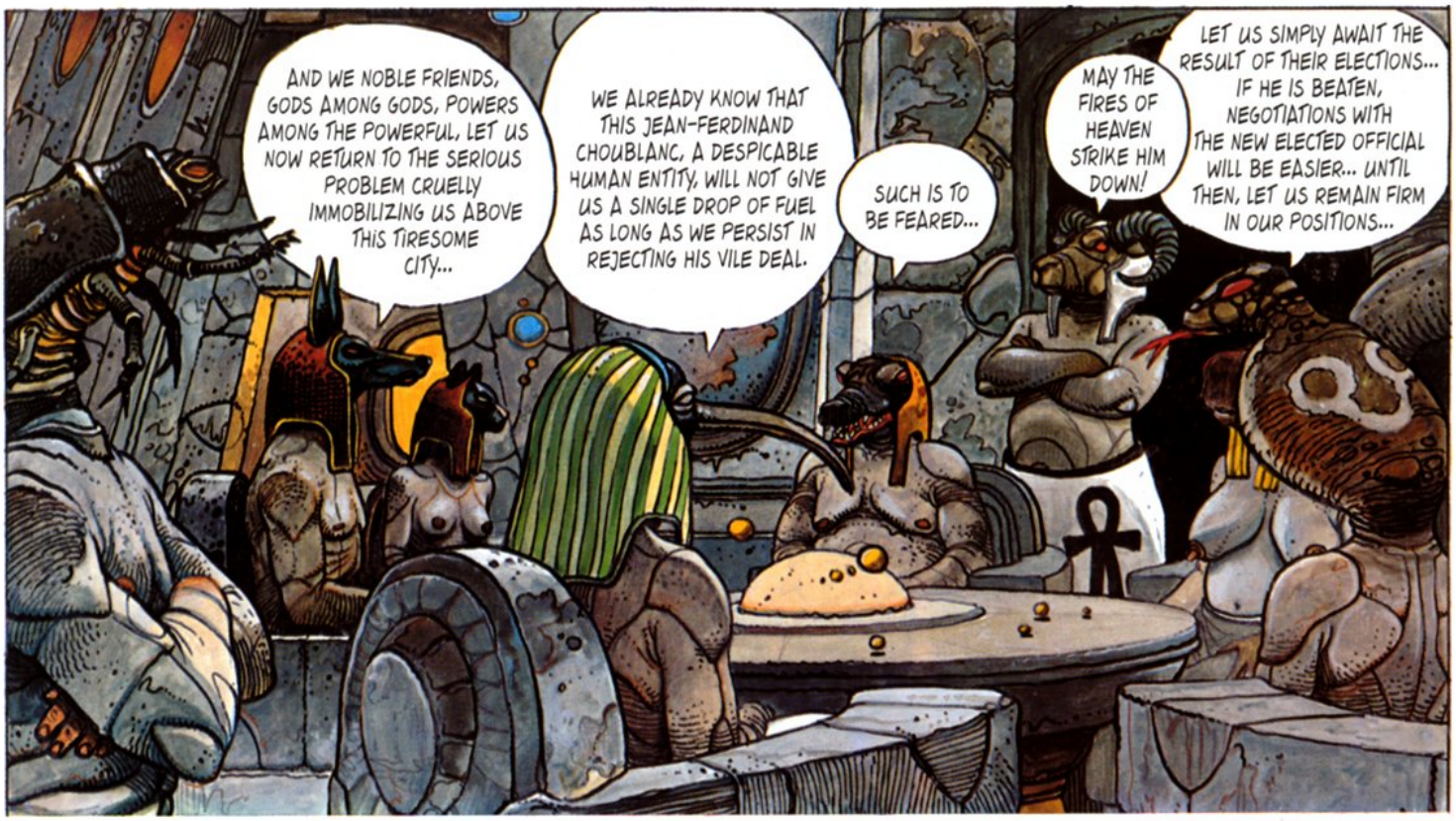
" Immortality is a form of dictatorship of life over death. Since I am a dictator and alive, all that remains for me is to become immortal. And this I will become ! Even if it kills me !"

J. F. Choublanc (Miscellaneous writings, Paris 2023)

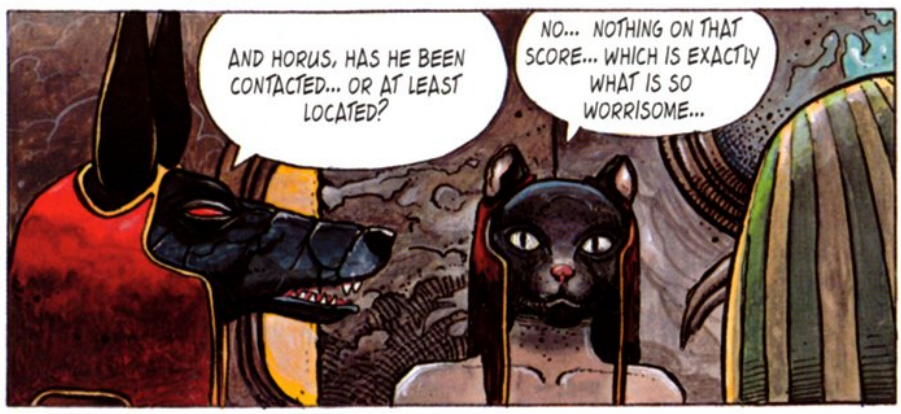
PARIS – EARLY MARCH **2023** – ON THE EVE OF A NEW BUT MEANINGLESS ELECTORAL MASQUERADE . . NOTHING IS LIKELY TO CHANGE IN THE POLITICALLY AUTONOMOUS AND HOPELESSLY FASCIST GREATER PARIS. THE CITY IS DIVIDED INTO TWO COMPLETELY UNEQUAL SECTORS... THE FIRST, THE CENTRAL CITY, IS INHABITED BY A SOCIAL ELITE, A MASSIVE STANDING ARMY AND THE RULING CLASS. THE SECOND SECTOR,SURROUNDING THE FIRST AND EXTENDING AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, HAS BECOME THE CROSSROADS FOR ALL KINDS OF ADVENTURERS AND EXTRATERRESTRIALS EVER SINCE A LARGE ASTROPORT WENT INTO SERVICE. THE GOVERNMENT MILITIA PATROLS, BUT ONLY SECONDARILY ENSURES THE SECURITY OF THIS WORLD OF DEGENERACY, POVERTY AND FILTH. IN ADDITION TO THE FAKE HUBBUB OF THE IMPENDING ELECTIONS THERE IS A STRANGE MALAISE BECAUSE OF THE APPEARANCE OF A HUGE, ODDLY PYRAMID-SHAPED SPACESHIP HOVERING OVER THE ASTROPORT. PUBLIC UNREST IS ON THE UPSWING. RUMOR IS THAT THE OCCUPANTS OF THE FLYING PYRAMID ARE DEMANDING ASTRONOMICAL QUANTITIES OF FUEL FROM THE CITY OF PARIS. THE CAUTIOUS (AND SUSPICIOUS) SILENCE OF JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC, THE PRESENT GOVERNOR, IS NOT REASSURING.




MATIGNON AVENUE, I'LL BUY!!!
22,000 FRANCS.
P
DANGER
I HAVE THREE RED ONES, I'LL BUILD...
15,000 PER HOUSE
I'M OUT!
...ME TOO! FOR GOOD! BY ACCEPTING THIS STUPID GAME FROM THE HUMANS, WE ARE BEGINNING TO ALTER OUR UNALTERABLE POSITION... THIS JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC IS TRYING TO CORRUPT US!
I SHARE THOTH'S VIEW, VENERABLE ANUBIS! THIS GAME CREATES TYPICALLY HUMAN NEEDS, UNWORTHY OF OUR COMMUNITY...
WHAT DO YOU SAY, BAST?
I THINK THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY BETRAYING OUR VERY NATURES, LOWERING OURSELVES TO PLAY A GAME ROOTED IN HUMAN BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS...
GOOD, WE SHALL DESTROY IT... BES!?
AT YOUR SERVICE, MY LORD.
BURN THIS GAME!
2

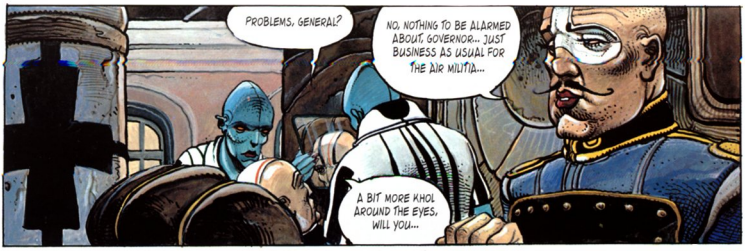

AND WE NOBLE FRIENDS, GODS AMONG GODS, POWERS AMONG THE POWERFUL, LET US NOW RETURN TO THE SERIOUS PROBLEM CRUELLY IMMOBILIZING US ABOVE THIS TIRESOME CITY...
WE ALREADY KNOW THAT THIS JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC, A DESPICABLE HUMAN ENTITY, WILL NOT GIVE US A SINGLE DROP OF FUEL AS LONG AS WE PERSIST IN REJECTING HIS VILE DEAL.
SUCH IS TO BE FEARED...
MAY THE FIRES OF HEAVEN STRIKE HIM DOWN!
LET US SIMPLY AWAIT THE RESULT OF THEIR ELECTIONS... IF HE IS BEATEN, NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NEW ELECTED OFFICIAL WILL BE EASIER... UNTIL THEN, LET US REMAIN FIRM IN OUR POSITIONS...

MONOPOLY


AND HORUS, HAS HE BEEN CONTACTED... OR AT LEAST LOCATED?
NO... NOTHING ON THAT SCORE... WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT IS SO WORRISOME...

VLOUFFF
3

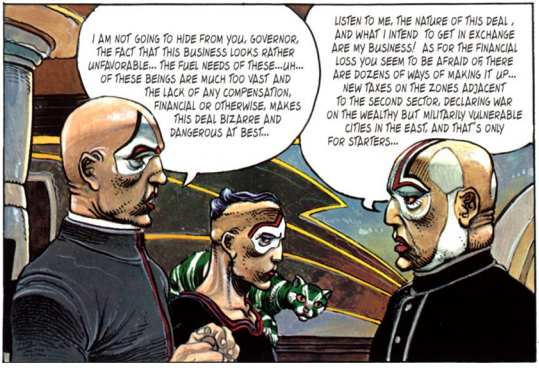
WORRISOME AND ALSO VERY DISTURBING... HIS UTTER DEFEAT AT THE LAST DIVINE COUNCIL MADE HIM LOSE ALL SENSE OF PROPORTION, IT WOULD SEEM.
HIS DESERTION IS PURE LIBEL AGAINST THE UNIVERSAL ORDER AND HOLY ETERNITY...
MAY CHAOS TURN HIM TO STONE.
DANGER
BURANT
... UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE, COMMANDER... IT SEEMS TO BE HEADING TOWARD THE CITY CENTER... RADIO APPARENTLY DEAD...
DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF IT AND GET ME GENERAL VERTEGOUTE FAST!
UH... THE GENERAL IS AT THE ELYSEE PALACE WITH THE GOVERNOR...
GET THROUGH TO HIM ANYWAY.
WELL, SHOOT IT DOWN IF IT CONTINUES TO REMAIN SILENT AND TO VIOLATE OUR AIR SPACE... AND USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR AIR FORCE . . . IT'S GOOD TO REASSURE AND IMPRESS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS... THERE... THAT'S ALL... KEEP ME POSTED...


PROBLEMS, GENERAL?
NO, NOTHING TO BE ALARMED ABOUT, GOVERNOR... JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE AIR MILITIA...
A BIT MORE KHOL AROUND THE EYES, WILL YOU...

LIKE THIS?
HMM... PERFECT, PERFECT... NOW LEAVE US, GIRLS...

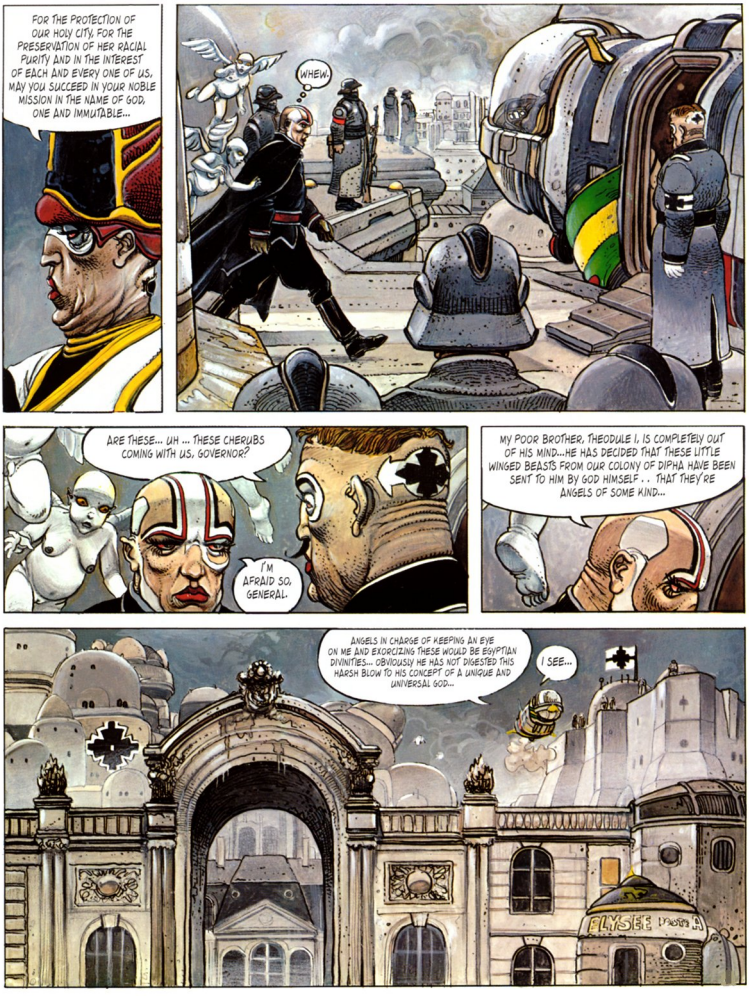
THE MINISTER FOR FINANCIAL COORDINATION HAS ARRIVED... HE WAS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH YOU, I BELIEVE...
QUITE SO, MY DEAR, HAVE HIM COME IN... AND YOU, GENERAL, TAKE CARE OF MY DEAR BROTHER, HIS HOLINESS THEODULE I... I WON'T BE LONG...

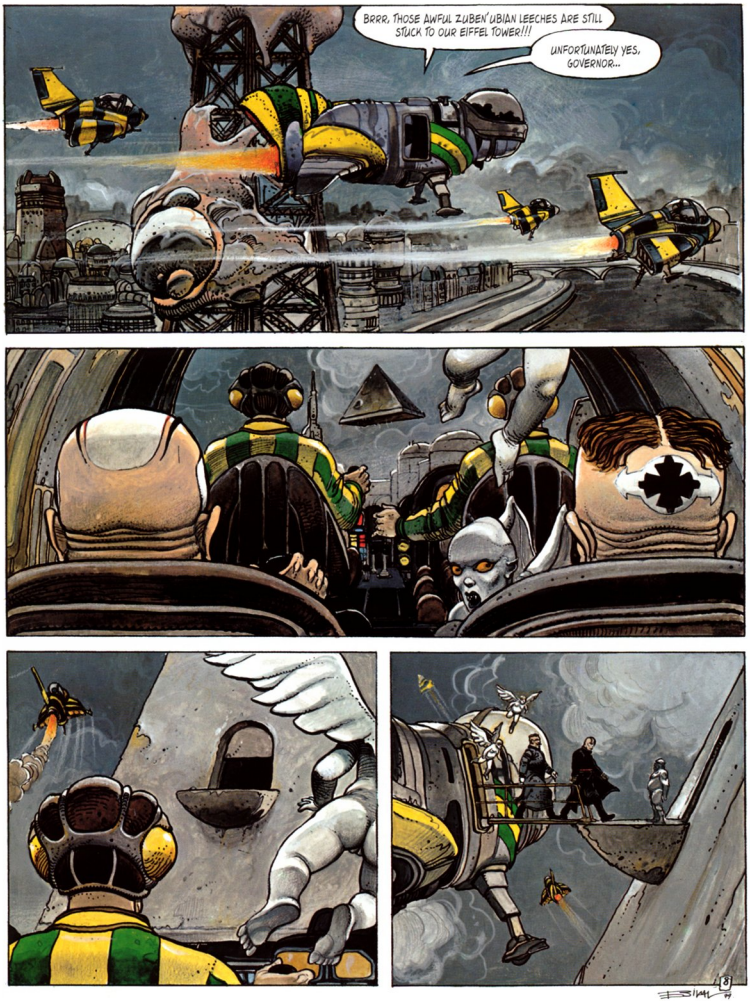
WELL, I AM WAITING FOR YOUR CONCLUSIONS, MY FRIEND!


I AM NOT GOING TO HIDE FROM YOU, GOVERNOR, THE FACT THAT THIS BUSINESS LOOKS RATHER UNFAVORABLE... THE FUEL NEEDS OF THESE...UH... OF THESE BEINGS ARE MUCH TOO VAST AND THE LACK OF ANY COMPENSATION, FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE, MAKES THIS DEAL BIZARRE AND DANGEROUS AT BEST...
LISTEN TO ME, THE NATURE OF THIS DEAL, AND WHAT I INTEND TO GET IN EXCHANGE ARE MY BUSINESS! AS FOR THE FINANCIAL LOSS YOU SEEM TO BE AFRAID OF THERE ARE DOZENS OF WAYS OF MAKING IT UP... NEW TAXES ON THE ZONES ADJACENT TO THE SECOND SECTOR, DECLARING WAR ON THE WEALTHY BUT MILITARILY VULNERABLE CITIES IN THE EAST, AND THAT'S ONLY FOR STARTERS...

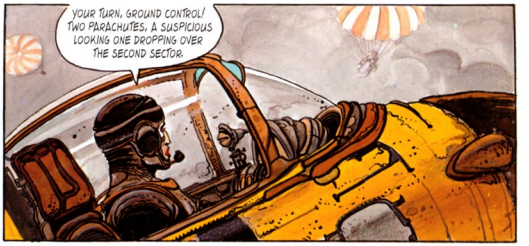
NO. WHAT I WANT TO KNOW RIGHT NOW IS WHETHER OR NOT SUCH A DRAIN ON OUR PRESENT FUEL SUPPLIES IS POSSIBLE.

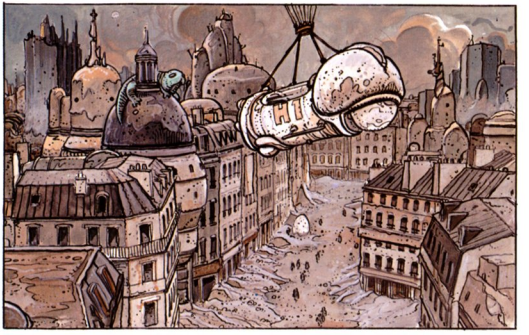
...ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS AND MY CABINET'S ESTIMATES, IT IS POSSIBLE... ALTHOUGH WE MUST THEN DEPEND ON A WAR IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO REPLENISH OUR TREASURY AND OUR FUEL RESERVES...
SHH, SHH... QUIET, GOGOL, QUIET!
PERFECT, MY DEAR FRIEND, THIS IS WHAT I NEED IN ORDER TO NEGOTIATE SOLIDLY WITH THIS JACKAL ANUBIS AND HIS BARNYARD COURT... YOU MAY GO NOW.
GOGOL!
GOD WILL RECOGNIZE HIS OWN IN THE TEST OF STRENGTH IN WHICH YOU MUST PARTICIPATE, JEAN- FERDINAND CHOUBLAC, GOVERNOR OF THE AUTONOMOUS CITY OF PARIS, AGAINST THIS UNCONTROLLABLE, IRREVERENTLY PAGAN COALITION OF SATAN WORSHIPERS WHO DARE, IN THEIR INFERNAL OUTLANDISHNESS, TO PROCLAIM THEMSELVES DIVINE AND ETERNAL...


FOR THE PROTECTION OF OUR HOLY CITY, FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HER RACIAL PURITY AND IN THE INTEREST OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US, MAY YOU SUCCEED IN YOUR NOBLE MISSION IN THE NAME OF GOD, ONE AND IMMUTABLE...
WHEW.
ARE THESE... UH ... THESE CHERUBS COMING WITH US, GOVERNOR?
I'M AFRAID SO, GENERAL.
MY POOR BROTHER, THEODULE I, IS COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS MIND...HE HAS DECIDED THAT THESE LITTLE WINGED BEASTS FROM OUR COLONY OF DIPHA HAVE BEEN SENT TO HIM BY GOD HIMSELF . . THAT THEY'RE ANGELS OF SOME KIND...
ANGELS IN CHARGE OF KEEPING AN EYE ON ME AND EXORCIZING THESE WOULD BE EGYPTIAN DIVINITIES... OBVIOUSLY HE HAS NOT DIGESTED THIS HARSH BLOW TO HIS CONCEPT OF A UNIQUE AND UNIVERSAL GOD...
I SEE...
ELYSEE


BRRR, THOSE AWFUL ZUBEN'UBIAN LEECHES ARE STILL STUCK TO OUR EIFFEL TOWER!!!
UNFORTUNATELY YES, GOVERNOR...

MEANWHILE, 9,000 TO 12,000 FEET ABOVE...
OBJECT SIGHTED AT 13:00 ...
LOOK AT THIS THING... A KIND OF PREHISTORIC SPACE CAPSULE...
YEAH... AND STILL NOT A SOUND OUT OF IT...
WATCH OUT. I'M GOING TO FIRE!
GO AHEAD!


YOUR TURN, GROUND CONTROL! TWO PARACHUTES, A SUSPICIOUS LOOKING ONE DROPPING OVER THE SECOND SECTOR.

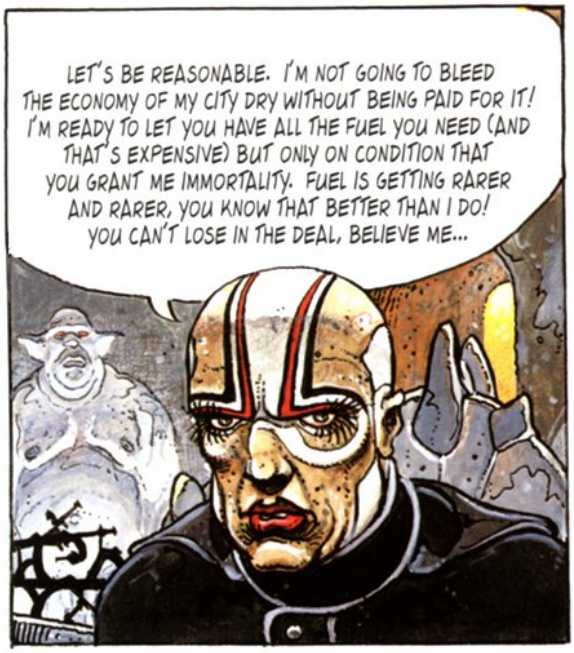


WHAT'S THAT?
HEAVEN FALLING. HOPE MESSAGE, MAYBE?
AFRAID !
VADE RETRO!
GARGOUILLE
MAGIE CURATIVE
ALESIA
DENTECT ROCHEREAU

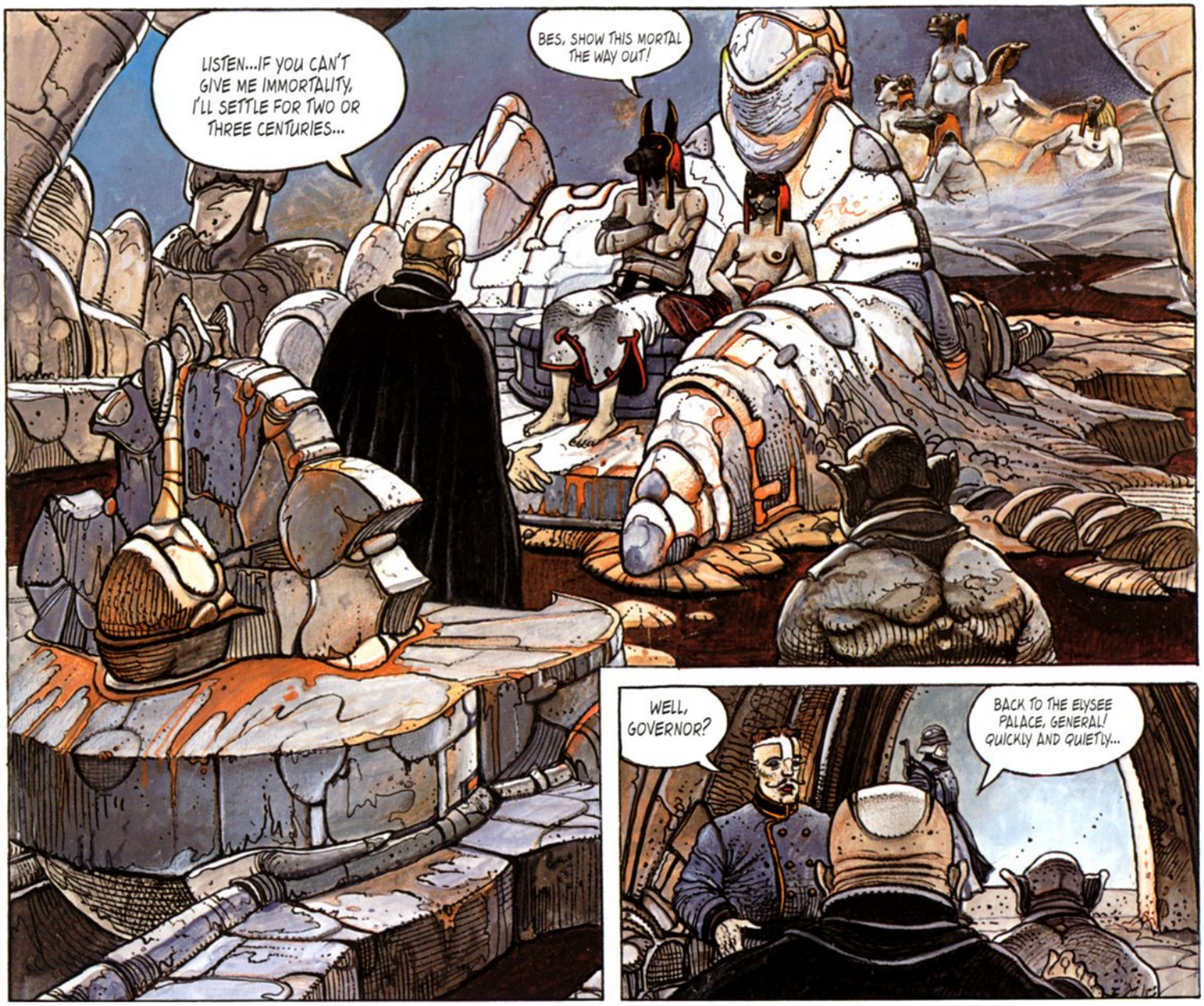
CRASH
CRACK
WHA? DA LEG FROZEN HARD!!!
IL GIVRÉ !?
YOU THE ONE FROSTY, IT FREEZE DRY!
VADE RETRO, SATAN!!!
FRIDGERED...
DEEP FREEZED...
BILAL
67

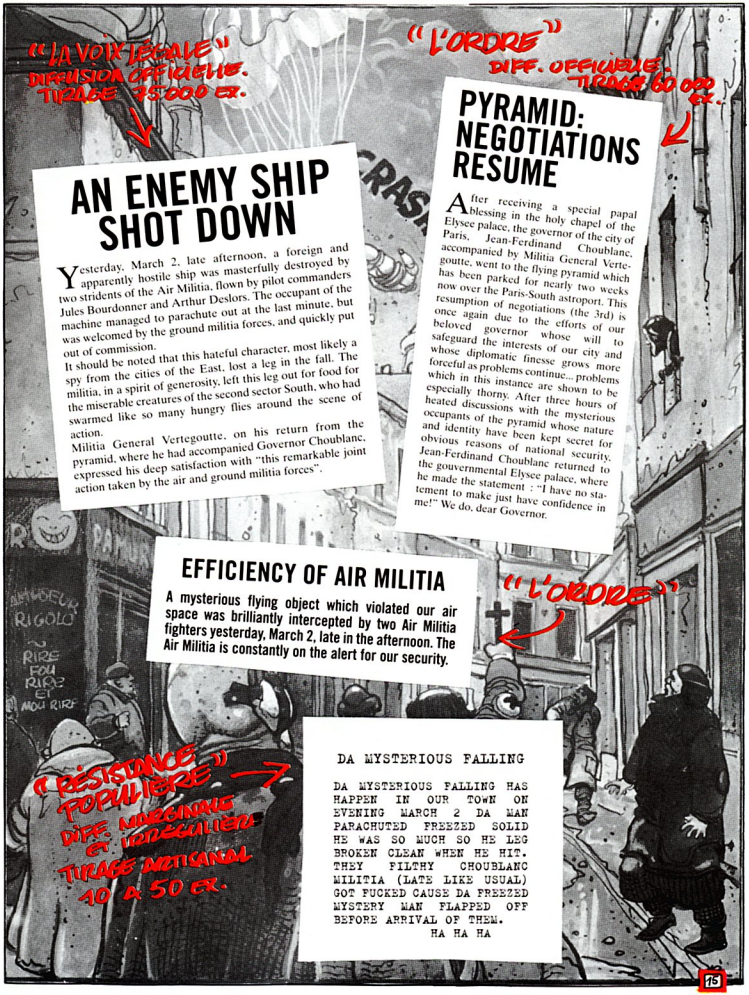
IL SATANIC PRODUCT! CHIORE DU DIABLE !!! VADE RET...
ROAARGH
IT SATANIC PRODUCT! SHITTING FROM DEVIL!!! VADE RET...
CIEL!
QUESCE?!?
N'OISEAU D'FEU
C'ALORS !??!
AGHH...
'DEDIEU !!!
M'BARRE MOI...
HEAVEN!
WHATSA!????
SA FIRE BIRD!
WHA!??!
G'GOD!!!
ME SPLIT...
VLOUFF
GADZOOKS! DIS IS MIRACLE!!! I NOT BELIEVE MY EYE!
SA FLAP SA FLY!
S'NOT TRUE!!!
WATCH! DA MILIT'S COMIN'!!!

S'BEAT IT!
HEY, YOU THERE!!!
FUCKIN' COPS!!!
HERE'S THE CONTAINER... A 1990 TYPE HIBERNATION CAPSULE I'D SAY... BUT UNFORTUNATELY EMPTY! THE OCCUPANT HAS FLOWN THE COOP.. IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD, HEDGE-HOPPING THROUGH THE ALLEYWAYS OF THIS PLAGUE-RIDDEN SEWER... IT'S RATHER HARD TO EXPLAIN... HIS SUIT DIDN'T SEEM FURNISHED WITH ANY SYSTEM OF PROPULSION...
WELL?
ALSO THE CONTAINER INDICATES A TEMPERATURE OF -18 C. WHICH PROVES THAT AT THE TIME OF HIS FALL OUR MAN WAS IN A TOTAL STATE OF HIBERNATION... CUT OFF FROM THE SURVIVAL SYSTEMS OF THE CAPSULE HE HASN'T GOT A CHANCE AND HE'S LOST A L...
BING
DOWN WID A CHOUBLANC POLICE STATE!
WHAT THE DEVIL IS THIS?
HIS LEG TO BE EXACT... IT MUST HAVE BROKEN OFF AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT... AT SO LOW A TEMPERATURE IT'S TO BE EXPECTED...


LET'S BE REASONABLE. I'M NOT GOING TO BLEED THE ECONOMY OF MY CITY DRY WITHOUT BEING PAID FOR IT! I'M READY TO LET YOU HAVE ALL THE FUEL YOU NEED (AND THAT'S EXPENSIVE) BUT ONLY ON CONDITION THAT YOU GRANT ME IMMORTALITY. FUEL IS GETTING RARER AND RARER, YOU KNOW THAT BETTER THAN I DO! YOU CAN'T LOSE IN THE DEAL, BELIEVE ME...

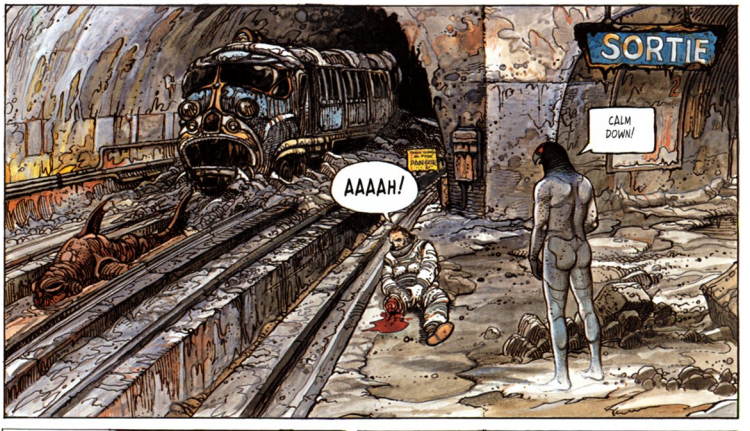
ENOUGH, JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC! IT IS OUT OF THE QUESTION TO GO AGAINST THE UNIVERSAL ORDER.
IT IS EQUALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION TO GRANT A HUMAN, ONE MISERABLE ENTITY AMONG MANY, THE ULTIMATE AND SUPREME STATE OF IMMORTALITY OF THE POWERFUL!
YOU MAY GO! AND DON'T FORGET THAT IT IS WE WHO HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD!


LISTEN...IF YOU CAN'T GIVE ME IMMORTALITY, I'LL SETTLE FOR TWO OR THREE CENTURIES...
BES, SHOW THIS MORTAL THE WAY OUT!
WELL, GOVERNOR?
BACK TO THE ELYSEE PALACE, GENERAL! QUICKLY AND QUIETLY...


"LA VOIX LEGALE"
DIFFUSION OFFICIELLE.
TIRAGE 25 000 EX.
"L'ORDRE"
DIFF. OFFICIELLE.
TIRAGE 60 000 EX.
AN ENEMY SHIP SHOT DOWN
Yesterday, March 2, late afternoon, a foreign and apparently hostile ship was masterfully destroyed by two stridents of the Air Militia, flown by pilot commanders Jules Bourdonner and Arthur Deslors. The occupant of the machine managed to parachute out at the last minute, but was welcomed by the ground militia forces, and quickly put out of commission.
It should be noted that this hateful character, most likely a spy from the cities of the East, lost a leg in the fall. The militia, in a spirit of generosity, let this leg out for food for the miserable creatures of the second sector South, who had swarmed like so many hungry flies around the scene of action.
Militia General Vertegoutte, on his return from the pyramid, where he had accompanied Governor Choublanc, expressed his deep satisfaction with "this remarkable joint action taken by the air and ground militia forces".
PYRAMID: NEGOTIATIONS RESUME
After receiving a special papal blessing in the holy chapel of the Elysee palace, the governor of the city of Paris, Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc, accompanied by Militia General Vertegoutte, went to the flying pyramid which has been parked for nearly two weeks now over the Paris-South astroport. This resumption of negotiations (the 3rd) is once again due to the efforts of our beloved governor whose will to safeguard the interests of our city and whose diplomatic finesse grows more forceful as problems continue... problems which in this instance are shown to be especially thorny. After three hours of heated discussions with the mysterious occupants of the pyramid whose nature and identity have been kept secret for obvious reasons of national security, Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc returned to the gouvernmental Elysee palace, where he made the statement : "I have no statement to make just have confidence in me!" We do, dear Governor.
EFFICIENCY OF AIR MILITIA
A mysterious flying object which violated our air space was brilliantly intercepted by two Air Militia fighters yesterday, March 2, late in the afternoon. The Air Militia is constantly on the alert for our security.
"L'ORDRE"
"RESISTANCE POPULAIRE"
DIFF. CLANDESTINE ET IRREGULIERE
TIRAGE ARTISANAL
10 A 50 EX.
DA MYSTERIOUS FALLING
DA MYSTERIOUS FALLING HAS HAPPEN IN OUR TOWN ON EVENING MARCH 2 DA MAN PARACHUTED FREEZED SOLID HE WAS SO MUCH SO HE LEG BROKEN CLEAN WHEN HE HIT. THEY FILTHY CHOUBLANC MILITIA (LATE LIKE USUAL) GOT FUCKED CAUSE DA FREEZED MYSTERY MAN FLAPPED OFF BEFORE ARRIVAL OF THEM.
HA HA HA
RIRE FOU RIRE ET MOU RIRE

"THE LAWFUL VOICE" OFFICIAL PRESS. CIRCULATION 25000
"PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE" FRINGE PRESS MIMEOGRAPH CIRCULATION 10 TO 50

"ORDER" OFFICIAL PRESS. CIRCULATION 60000
"ORDER"

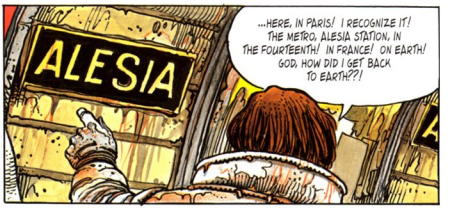

SORTIE
AAAAH!
CALM DOWN!

MY LEG!!! GOD, WHERE'S MY LEG!??

WHO'D YOU SAY?
HORUS! THE ONE TO WHOM YOU OWE THE EXTENSION OF YOUR MISERABLE MORTAL LIFE... THE ONE WHO IS GOING TO GIVE YOU THE HONOR OF LIVING IN YOUR BODY. THE ONE WHO KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOUR POOR PATHETIC LIFE AS A DESERTER, ALCIDE NIKOPOL!

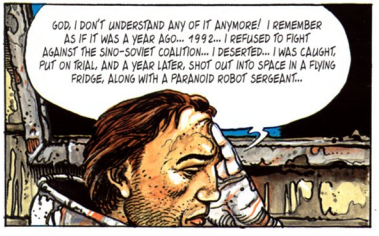
4
I SAID, CALM DOWN, YOU PITIFUL HUMAN, AND LISTEN TO WHAT I, HORUS, GOD AMONG THE GODS, IMMORTAL AMONG THE IMMORTALS, HAVE TO SAY TO YOU...

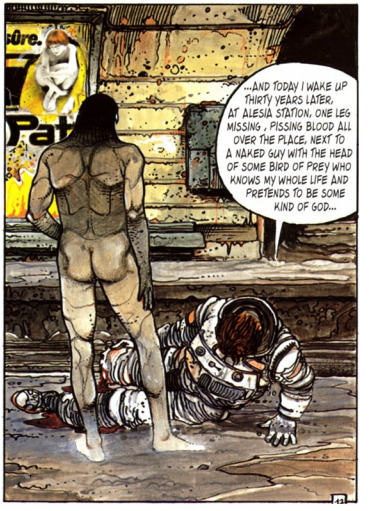
NIKOPOL... ALCIDE NIKOPOL!? HEY, THAT'S MY NAME!!!? WHO ARE YOU FOR GOD'S SAKE, AND HOW DID I GET HERE?!!!

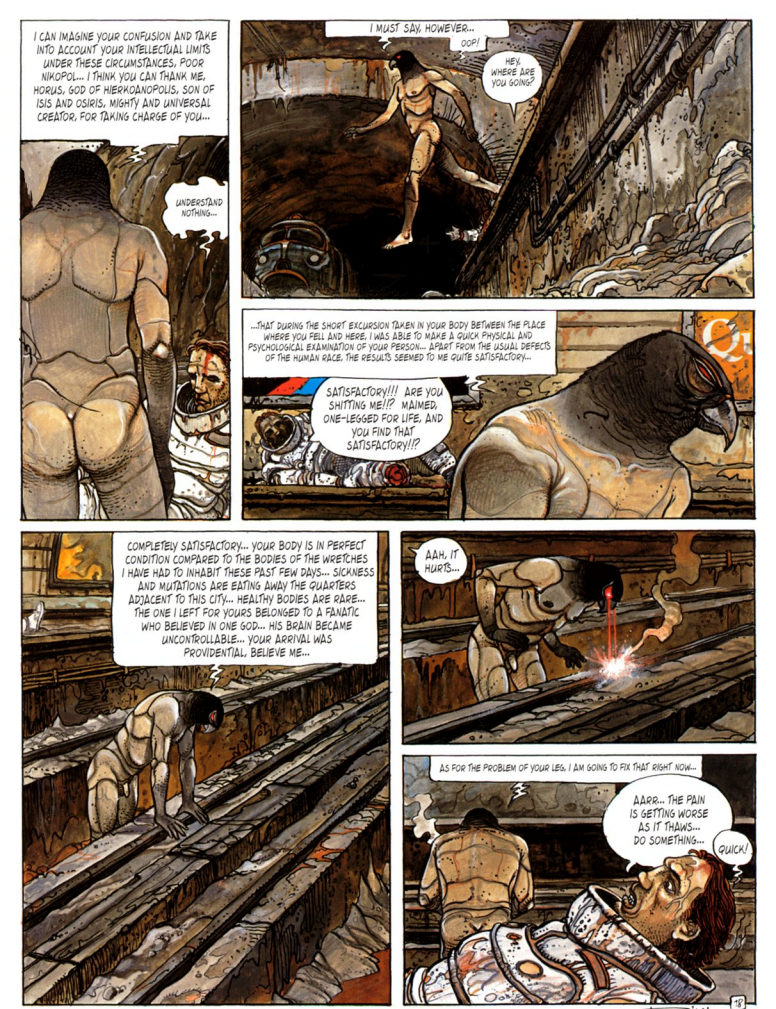

ALESIA
...HERE, IN PARIS! I RECOGNIZE IT! THE METRO, ALESIA STATION, IN THE FOURTEENTH! IN FRANCE! ON EARTH! GOD, HOW DID I GET BACK TO EARTH??!

...FOR THE TIME BEING I DON'T KNOW... BUT I DO KNOW THAT IN 1993 A FRENCH MILITARY COURT SENTENCED YOU FOR DESERTION TO BE SHIPPED OUT INTO THE COSMOS WITHOUT HOPE OF RETURNING... WITH THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS OF THE TRIP TO BE SPENT IN A STATE OF HIBERNATION...
YES, I REMEMBER ALL THAT... AND TODAY, WHAT YEAR IS IT?
2023.

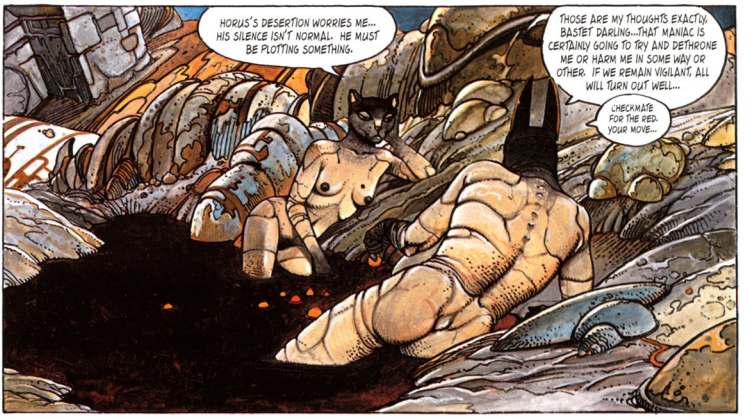
...2023! SHIIIT...
WHICH MEANS THAT YOU LEFT YOUR PLANET THIRTY YEARS AGO, SAD MORTAL... AND SINCE I HAVE JUST UNFROZEN YOU, I DEDUCE THAT YOU UNDERWENT AN ADDITIONAL TEN YEARS OF HIBERNATION... MOST SURELY AN ACT OF THIS XB2 WHO WENT ALONG WITH YOU...
XB2... XB2... YES, I REMEMBER... MY GUARD, HE WAS PUNISHED TOO... BUT FOR INSUBORDINATION... CHIEF SERGEANT ROBOT XB2...

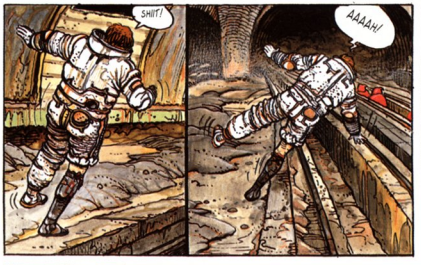

GOD, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT ANYMORE! I REMEMBER AS IF IT WAS A YEAR AGO... 1992... I REFUSED TO FIGHT AGAINST THE SINO-SOVIET COALITION... I DESERTED... I WAS CAUGHT, PUT ON TRIAL, AND A YEAR LATER, SHOT OUT INTO SPACE IN A FLYING FRIDGE, ALONG WITH A PARANOID ROBOT SERGEANT...


...AND TODAY I WAKE UP THIRTY YEARS LATER, AT ALESIA STATION, ONE LEG MISSING, PISSING BLOOD ALL OVER THE PLACE, NEXT TO A NAKED GUY WITH THE HEAD OF SOME BIRD OF PREY WHO KNOWS MY WHOLE LIFE AND PRETENDS TO BE SOME KIND OF GOD...


I CAN IMAGINE YOUR CONFUSION AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT YOUR INTELLECTUAL LIMITS UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, POOR NIKOPOL... I THINK YOU CAN THANK ME, HORUS, GOD OF HIERKOANOPOLIS, SON OF ISIS AND OSIRIS, MIGHTY AND UNIVERSAL CREATOR, FOR TAKING CHARGE OF YOU...
UNDERSTAND NOTHING...
I MUST SAY, HOWEVER...
OOF!
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
...THAT DURING THE SHORT EXCURSION TAKEN IN YOUR BODY BETWEEN THE PLACE WHERE YOU FELL AND HERE, I WAS ABLE TO MAKE A QUICK PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF YOUR PERSON... APART FROM THE USUAL DEFECTS OF THE HUMAN RACE, THE RESULTS SEEMED TO ME QUITE SATISFACTORY...
SATISFACTORY!!! ARE YOU SHITTING ME!!? MAIMED, ONE-LEGGED FOR LIFE, AND YOU FIND THAT SATISFACTORY!!?
COMPLETELY SATISFACTORY... YOUR BODY IS IN PERFECT CONDITION COMPARED TO THE BODIES OF THE WRETCHES I HAVE HAD TO INHABIT THESE PAST FEW DAYS... SICKNESS AND MUTATIONS ARE EATING AWAY THE QUARTERS ADJACENT TO THIS CITY... HEALTHY BODIES ARE RARE... THE ONE I LEFT FOR YOURS BELONGED TO A FANATIC WHO BELIEVED IN ONE GOD... HIS BRAIN BECAME UNCONTROLLABLE... YOUR ARRIVAL WAS PROVIDENTIAL, BELIEVE ME...
AAH, IT HURTS...
AS FOR THE PROBLEM OF YOUR LEG, I AM GOING TO FIX THAT RIGHT NOW...
AARR... THE PAIN IS GETTING WORSE AS IT THAWS... DO SOMETHING...
QUICK!
15

DON'T WORRY, I'M GOING TO NUMB YOUR LEG BEFORE GRAFTING...
GRAFTING!??? WHAT GRAFTING?! AND WHAT'S WITH THAT PIECE OF SCRAP IRON!?
YOUR NEW LEG, ALCIDE NIKOPOL... A LEG OF STEEL... INDESTRUCTIBLE...
THREE HOURS LATER...
YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING?
QUIET!
NOW FOR THE SHAPING...
THERE WE GO!... YOU CAN GET UP AND TRY IT OUT...
....

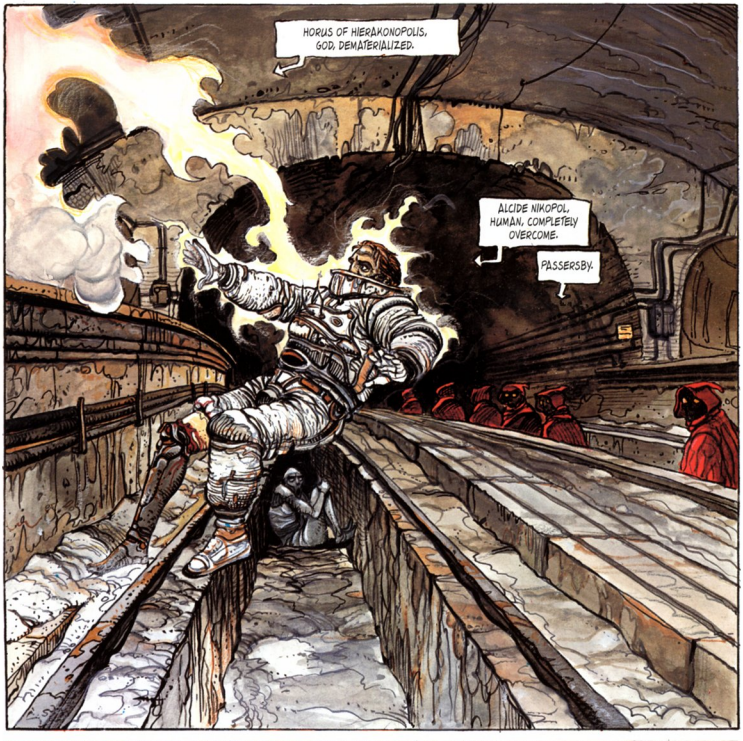

HORUS'S DESERTION WORRIES ME... HIS SILENCE ISN'T NORMAL. HE MUST BE PLOTTING SOMETHING.
THOSE ARE MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY, BASTET DARLING...THAT MANIAC IS CERTAINLY GOING TO TRY AND DETHRONE ME OR HARM ME IN SOME WAY OR OTHER. IF WE REMAIN VIGILANT, ALL WILL TURN OUT WELL...
CHECKMATE FOR THE RED. YOUR MOVE...

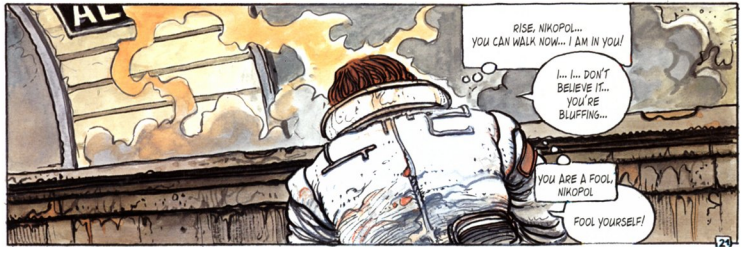


YOU WILL WALK, ALCIDE NIKOPOL, AND BETTER THAN BEFORE, AS SOON AS I'VE TAKEN POSSESSION OF YOUR BODY... YOUR BODY AND YOUR BRAIN SINCE I HAVE AN ACT OF VENGEANCE TO CARRY OUT... A REVENGE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR WHICH YOU WILL BE MY PRIVILEGED INSTRUMENT... THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO DEMATERIALIZE AND MELT INTO YOU...
MELT INTO ME? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? ARE YOU JOKING OR WHAT?

NO, HORUS OF HIERAKONOPOLIS, THE PARANOID AND VENGEFUL GOD, WAS NOT JOKING... ARMED WITH HIS LIMITLESS POWERS AND HIS AMBITION, HE WAS NOW READY TO UNDERTAKE AN ESPECIALLY LABYRINTHINE PROCESS OF REVENGE...

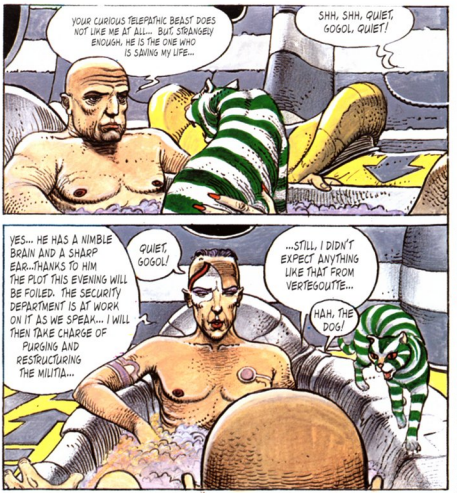
THUS ON MARCH 3, 2023, AT METRO STATION ALESIA, TOOK PLACE THE POSSESSION OF THE BODY OF ALCIDE NIKOPOL BY HORUS OF HIERAKONOPOLIS.

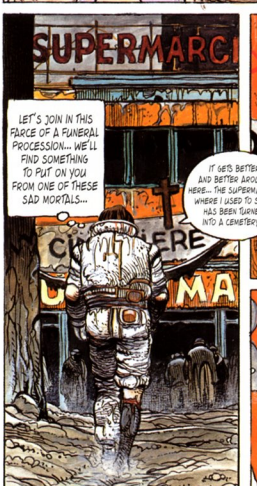




EVERYTHING IS READY, GENERAL. THE GOVERNOR'S ARMCHAIR WILL EXPLODE THIS EVENING AT EXACTLY 9 PM., JUST BEFORE HALF TIME...
VERY GOOD, MY FRIEND... YOU HAVE OF COURSE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT MY PRESENCE BESIDE THE GOVERNOR AT THE MOMENT OF THE EXPLOSION!?
REST ASSURED, GENERAL. IT WILL NOT REALLY BE AN EXPLOSION... I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM ONE OF THE ALPHERATZIEN HANDLERS AT THE ASTROPORT OF VARECH OF FOMALH-AUT... A SIMPLE ELECTRIC SPARK SUFFICIENT TO TURN THIS SUBSTANCE INTO A DEADLY HIGH-ENERGY ONE .. THE GOVERNOR WILL BE SEATED THIS EVENING ON A KIND OF ELECTRIC CHAIR . . YOU WILL BE IN NO DANGER, GENERAL...
GOOD.
MY OFFICERS AND THEIR MEN WILL BE READY AS WELL... AND FROM THIS EVENING ON POWER WILL HAVE CHANGED HANDS... MY FRIEND, THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! A DROP OF OLD COGNAC?
HE IS TRULY PRECIOUS TO ME. BUT, GOD, IS HE UGLY!
NO THANK YOU, I NEVER TOUCH ALCOHOL.
AMT
WE MUST QUICKLY FIND SOME NEW CLOTHES... YOU WILL BE SPOTTED AND PICKED UP WITH THIS SUIT ON...
GOOD LORD, HAS PARIS CHANGED...
NORMAL, AFTER 30 YEARS AND TWO NUCLEAR WARS...
STILL... WHAT A SHOCK...

AT THE SAME MOMENT, BUT AT THE ELYSEE PALACE, IN THE BATHROOM...

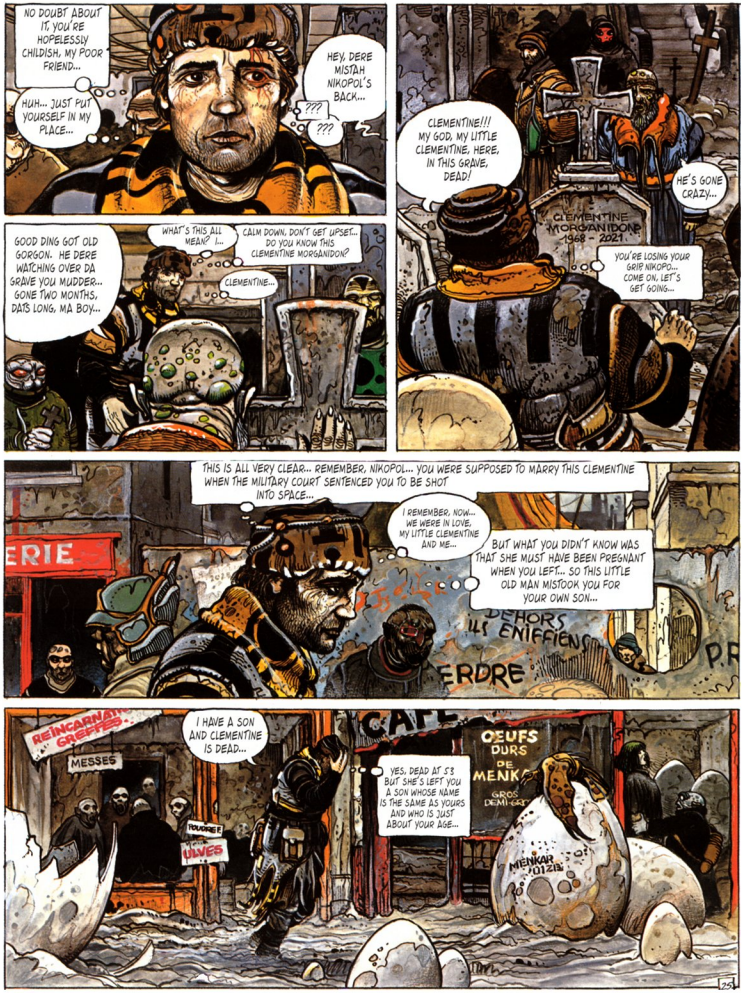

YOUR CURIOUS TELEPATHIC BEAST DOES NOT LIKE ME AT ALL... BUT, STRANGELY ENOUGH, HE IS THE ONE WHO IS SAVING MY LIFE...
SHH, SHH, QUIET, GOGOL, QUIET!
YES... HE HAS A NIMBLE BRAIN AND A SHARP EAR...THANKS TO HIM THE PLOT THIS EVENING WILL BE FOILED. THE SECURITY DEPARTMENT IS AT WORK ON IT AS WE SPEAK... I WILL THEN TAKE CHARGE OF PURGING AND RESTRUCTURING THE MILITIA...
QUIET, GOGOL!
...STILL, I DIDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING LIKE THAT FROM VERTEGOUTTE...
HAH, THE DOG!
AAAAH!
GOGOL!!!

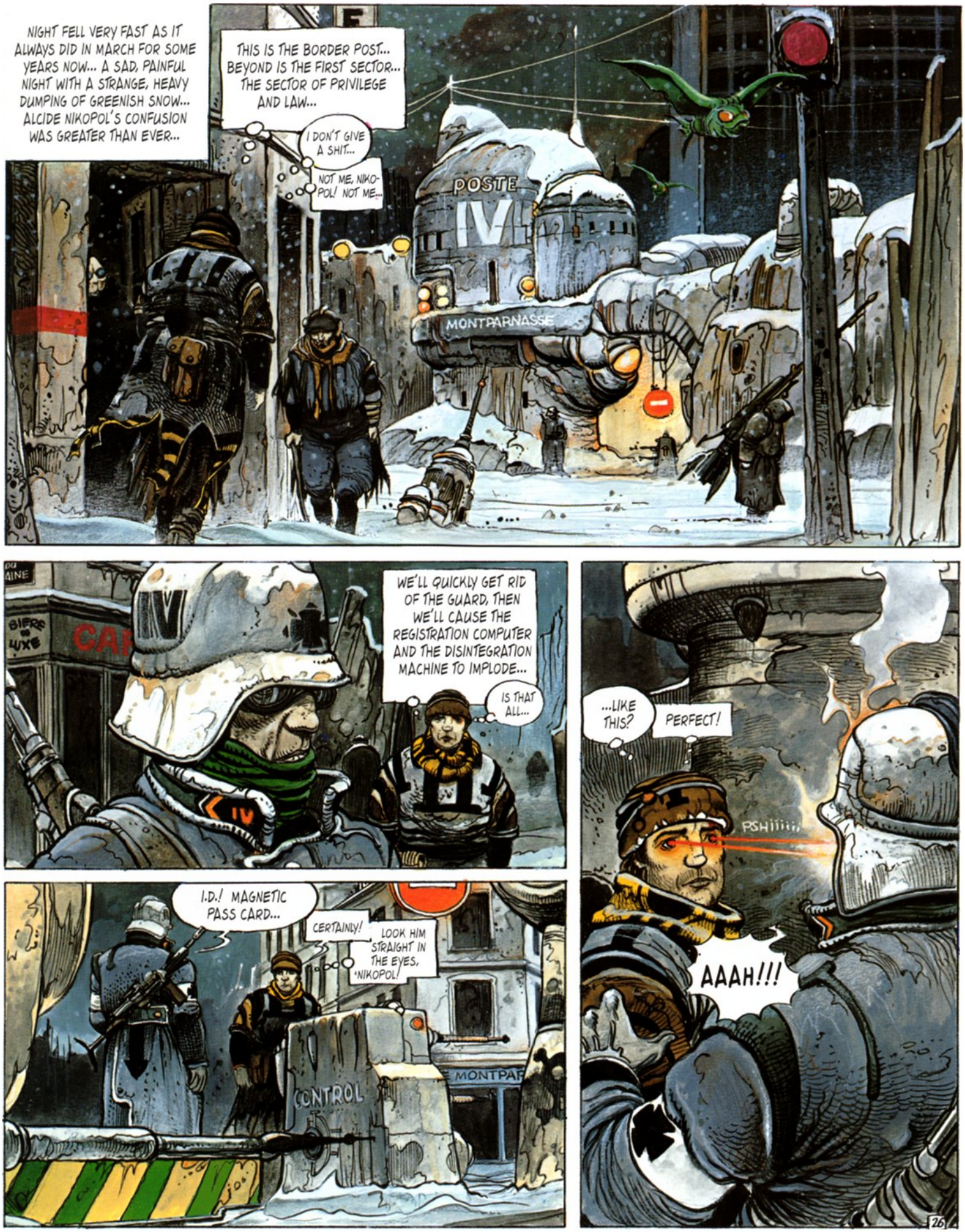

SUPERMARCI
LET'S JOIN IN THIS FARCE OF A FUNERAL PROCESSION... WE'LL FIND SOMETHING TO PUT ON YOU FROM ONE OF THESE SAD MORTALS...
IT GETS BETTER AND BETTER AROUND HERE... THE SUPERMARKET WHERE I USED TO SHOP HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A CEMETERY...

THIS GUY AHEAD OF US SHOULD DO THE TRICK... HE'S JUST ABOUT YOUR SIZE...
I'M WARNING YOU, I HATE USING VIOLENCE...
A BASIL CHOUBLANQUISME FASCISTIQUE

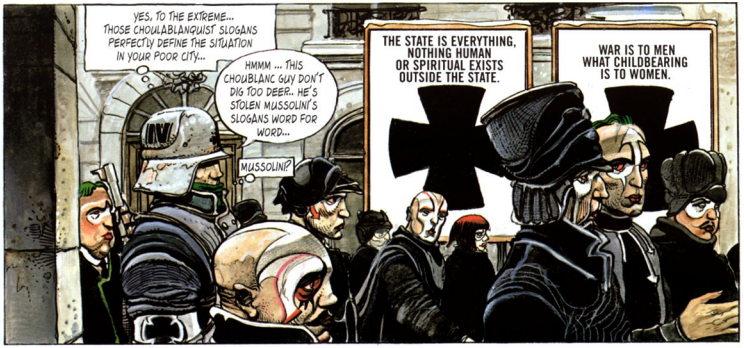
YOU'LL USE WHAT I TELL YOU WHEN I TELL YOU TO... DON'T FORGET THAT I HAVE THE POWER TO DISCONNECT YOUR BRAIN CELLS, NIKOPOL!
YOU'RE THE LOWEST!
I KNOW...

HEY, HE'S LEAVING THE PROCESSION...
OF COURSE... I JUST ORDERED HIM TO!
ALIMENTATION
ESCALATOR
ELECT
ALLEE 1
SURG
ABOS
GO AHEAD, IT'S OKAY.
THANKS, OLD BOY!
YOU SEE, NIKOPOL, ALL NICE AND FRIENDLY... NO VIOLENCE AND NOT A DROP OF BLOOD...
DID YOU HYPNOTIZE HIM?
SORT OF..
I FEEL YOU'RE ON EDGE, NIKOPOL... YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME, AREN'T YOU?
I DON'T APPRECIATE YOUR POWERS OR YOUR WAYS... AND STILL LESS HAVING YOU INSIDE ME...
AND THEN THE GUY WHOSE CLOTHES I'M WEARING WAS COVERED WITH RED SORES... I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT CATCHING SOME INCURABLE DISEASE.


NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, YOU'RE HOPELESSLY CHILDISH, MY POOR FRIEND...
HUH... JUST PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE...
HEY, DERE MISTAH NIKOPOL'S BACK...
???
???
GOOD DING GOT OLD GORGON. HE DERE WATCHING OVER DA GRAVE YOU MUDDER... GONE TWO MONTHS, DATS LONG, MA BOY...
WHAT'S THIS ALL MEAN? I...
CALM DOWN, DON'T GET UPSET... DO YOU KNOW THIS CLEMENTINE MORGANIDON?
CLEMENTINE...
CLEMENTINE!!! MY GOD, MY LITTLE CLEMENTINE, HERE, IN THIS GRAVE, DEAD!
HE'S GONE CRAZY...
CLEMENTINE MORGANIDON 1968 - 2021
YOU'RE LOSING YOUR GRIP NIKOPO... COME ON, LET'S GET GOING...
THIS IS ALL VERY CLEAR... REMEMBER, NIKOPOL... YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MARRY THIS CLEMENTINE WHEN THE MILITARY COURT SENTENCED YOU TO BE SHOT INTO SPACE...
I REMEMBER, NOW... WE WERE IN LOVE, MY LITTLE CLEMENTINE AND ME...
BUT WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT SHE MUST HAVE BEEN PREGNANT WHEN YOU LEFT... SO THIS LITTLE OLD MAN MISTOOK YOU FOR YOUR OWN SON...
ERIE
DEHORS ILS ENIFFIENS
ERDRE
REINCARNATIONS GREFFES
MESSES
I HAVE A SON AND CLEMENTINE IS DEAD...
YES, DEAD AT 53 BUT SHE'S LEFT YOU A SON WHOSE NAME IS THE SAME AS YOURS AND WHO IS JUST ABOUT YOUR AGE...
CAFE
OEUFS DURS DE MENK
GROS DEMI-GRO
POUDRE E
ULVES
MENKAR 1012B

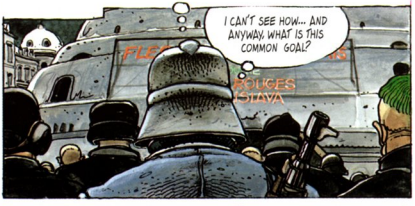

NIGHT FELL VERY FAST AS IT ALWAYS DID IN MARCH FOR SOME YEARS NOW... A SAD, PAINFUL NIGHT WITH A STRANGE, HEAVY DUMPING OF GREENISH SNOW... ALCIDE NIKOPOL'S CONFUSION WAS GREATER THAN EVER...
THIS IS THE BORDER POST... BEYOND IS THE FIRST SECTOR... THE SECTOR OF PRIVILEGE AND LAW...
I DON'T GIVE A SHIT...
NOT ME, NIKOPOL! NOT ME...
POSTE
IV
MONTPARNASSE
WE'LL QUICKLY GET RID OF THE GUARD, THEN WE'LL CAUSE THE REGISTRATION COMPUTER AND THE DISINTEGRATION MACHINE TO IMPLODE...
IS THAT ALL...
...LIKE THIS?
PERFECT!
PSHIIIIII
AAAH!!!
I.D.! MAGNETIC PASS CARD...
CERTAINLY!
LOOK HIM STRAIGHT IN THE EYES, NIKOPOL!
CONTROL
MONTPAR

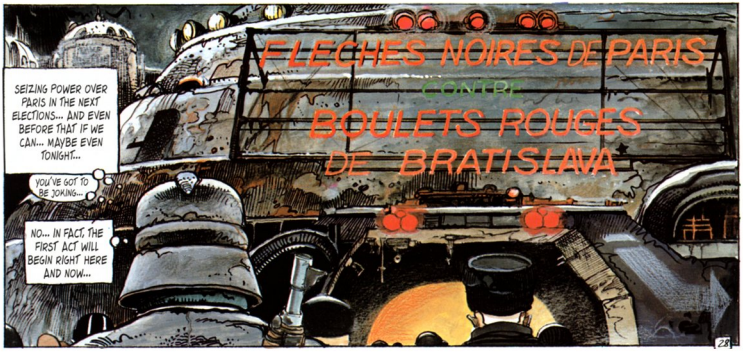
LET'S GO, NIKOPOL... ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW IS TO BLOW UP THE DISINTEGRATOR AND CHANGE INTO THE MILITIAMAN'S GEAR...
DESINTEGRATOR SX
SCREW THIS! MY HEAD ACHES AND MY EYES ARE SMOKING...
BETTER?
HOW MANY TIMES A DAY AM I GOING TO HAVE TO CHANGE COSTUME, HUH?
AS MANY TIMES AS NECESSARY... NOW WE'LL FOLLOW THE CROWD HEADING TOWARD THE TEMPLE OF SPORTS AND CONVENTIONS...
ODEON
OKAY ...
...SO THIS IS THE PRIVILEGED ELITE OF THE FIRST SECTOR?
YES... PARISIAN HIGH SOCIETY, SO TO SPEAK... YOU'VE PROBABLY NOTICED THE ABSENCE OF WOMEN IN THIS TEEMING CARNIVAL . . . MOST OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE ARE AUTOMATICALLY SENT TO THE HOLY SAVIOR MATERNITY CENTER, A GIGANTIC AND OMINOUSLY STERILE UNDERGROUND CLINIC OF SORTS, WHERE THE RATE OF BIRTHING IS SCIENTIFICALLY ACCELERATED... THE PROGRAMMING IS DESIGNED TO PRODUCE ABOUT 80% OF MALE CHILDREN... ALL DESTINED FOR THE GOVERNMENT ARMIES... YOUR RACE IS ONE OF RARE STUPIDITY AND CRIPPLING SEXISM, NIKOPOL...
NAW... OUR SOCIAL FLAWS HAVE JUST FINALLY GOTTEN MORE STRONGLY PRONOUNCED...

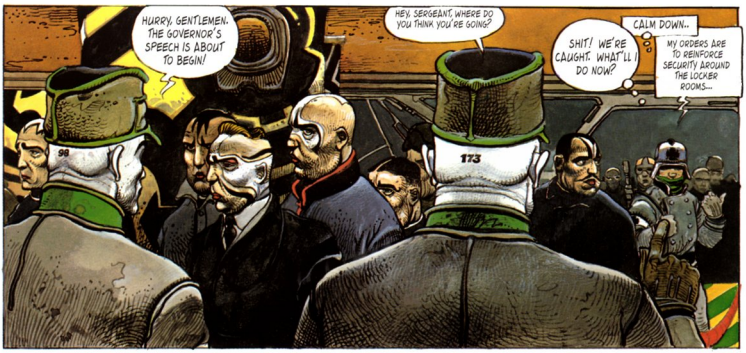

YES. TO THE EXTREME... THOSE CHOULABLANQUIST SLOGANS PERFECTLY DEFINE THE SITUATION IN YOUR POOR CITY...
HMMM ... THIS CHOUBLANC GUY DON'T DIG TOO DEEP.. HE'S STOLEN MUSSOLINI'S SLOGANS WORD FOR WORD...
MUSSOLINI?
THE STATE IS EVERYTHING, NOTHING HUMAN OR SPIRITUAL EXISTS OUTSIDE THE STATE.
WAR IS TO MEN WHAT CHILDBEARING IS TO WOMEN.

YES... A DICTATOR FROM THE LAST CENTURY... I CAN STILL REMEMBER MY COLLEGE EXAM ESSAY QUESTION FROM 1980... "THE RISE OF FASCISM IN ITALY"... A COMPLETE MESS...

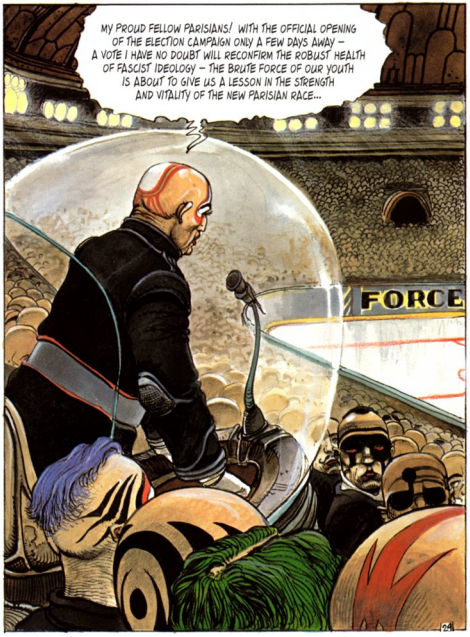
YOU SEE, NIKOPOL, I THINK FINALLY WE ARE GOING TO COME UP WITH A COMMON GOAL... YOURS, POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN, AND MINE, PERSONAL REVENGE OF A DIVINE AND UNIVERSAL SCOPE... AT THE BEGINNING I THOUGHT I WOULD HAVE TO DISCONNECT YOUR BRAIN FUNCTIONS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO USE YOUR BODY WITHOUT ANY INTERFERENCE. BUT NOW I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THAT A KIND OF.. COOPERATIVE EFFORT MAY BE POSSIBLE...



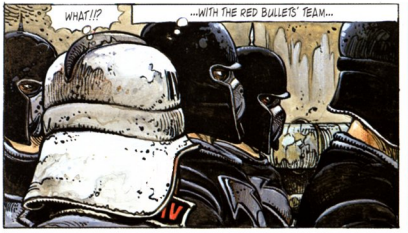

FLECHES NOIRES DE PARIS
CONTRE
BOULETS ROUGES DE BRATISLAVA
SEIZING POWER OVER PARIS IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS... AND EVEN BEFORE THAT IF WE CAN... MAYBE EVEN TONIGHT...
YOU'VE GOT TO BE JOKING...
NO... IN FACT, THE FIRST ACT WILL BEGIN RIGHT HERE AND NOW...


HURRY, GENTLEMEN. THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!
HEY, SERGEANT, WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
SHIT! WE'RE CAUGHT. WHAT'LL I DO NOW?
CALM DOWN..
MY ORDERS ARE TO REINFORCE SECURITY AROUND THE LOCKER ROOMS...
98
173

WE'RE GOING TO HEAD FOR THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE TO THE RINK... I'VE GOT A LITTLE IDEA...
A RINK? WHAT'S THAT MEAN?
JUST WAIT, NIKOPOL...
UNOIRE


MY PROUD FELLOW PARISIANS! WITH THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN ONLY A FEW DAYS AWAY – A VOTE I HAVE NO DOUBT WILL RECONFIRM THE ROBUST HEALTH OF FASCIST IDEOLOGY – THE BRUTE FORCE OF OUR YOUTH IS ABOUT TO GIVE US A LESSON IN THE STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF THE NEW PARISIAN RACE...
FORCE

...A RACE WHICH TODAY EMANATES SUCH PHYSICAL POWER THAT ITS DUTY TO SPREAD OVER THE WORLD IS AS UNDENIABLE AS THAT OF MIGHTY RIVERS TO FLOW TO THE SEA!!!
LET OUR BLACK ARROWS HEAR WHAT I SAY SO THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THAT ABOVE AND BEYOND TONIGHT'S GAME, WE EXPECT NOTHING LESS THAN FOR THEM TO SYMBOLICALLY CRUSH AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS TOTALLY OUTDATED AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO OUR NEW MINDS.
2:15 PM.
...AND NOW LET THE GAMES BEGIN.
THIS BARGAIN BASEMENT DICTATOR HAS BORROWED IT ALL... WORD FOR WORD FROM IL DUCE...
WHO?
THE SAME ONE I MENTIONED BEFORE...
WATCH OUT, I THINK THEY'RE COMING...
THEY WHO?
THE BLACK ARROWS...
GOD, IS THAT IT? HOCKEY PLAYERS? WE'RE GOING TO WATCH A HOCKEY GAME?
WE'RE EVEN GOING TO PLAY, NIKOPOL...


WHAT!!?
...WITH THE RED BULLETS' TEAM...

Б
ЧССР
11

BUT THAT'S CRAZY!!! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PLAY OR EVEN SKATE... AND AFTER SPENDING THIRTY YEARS ON ICE I'M NOT EXACTLY CRAZY ABOUT...
QUIET, NIKOPOL! HERE THEY COME...

A STRAGGLER... PERFECT...
ЧССР
23

ЧТО ЭТ..
Б
23

NOW YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...
WHEW.
23

8:38 PM.
ONLY 22 MINUTES TO GO! HA HA...
PARIS BLACK ARROWS 2, BRATISLAVA RED BULLETS 0
8:45 PM.
IN A QUARTER OF AN HOUR.
BLACK ARROWS 3, RED BULLETS 0 AND ONE SERIOUS INJURY.
8:56 PM.
IN FOUR MINUTES.
BLACK ARROWS 3, ONE INJURED (CRITICALLY), RED BULLETS 1, ONE DEAD AND TWO INJURED (ONE SERIOUSLY).
AAGH!
PARIS
18

8:59 AND 52 SECONDS.
7, 6, 5, 4...
3, 2, 1...
AAAAH
... ZERO ...
POOR FOOL...
9:07. THE GAME, TEMPORARILY HALTED, CAN NOW RESUME... THE RED BULLETS, COMPLETELY DECIMATED, THROW THEIR LAST TEAM INTO BATTLE...
ZVYTĚZTE NEBO ZEMŘETE!!!
I'M GOING TO DISCONNECT YOU, NIKOPOL... FOR GREATER SECURITY...
ACTUALLY, I PREFER IT THAT WAY.
SILAI 79
33

9:19 PM. A COMPLETE REVERSAL OF THE SITUATION AND THE SCORE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF STUPIFIED, ICY SILENCE.
THAT 23 FUCK!! HE'S GOT TO BE SHOT DOWN!!!
F.N. PARIS 3
B.R. BRATISL. 4
DEAD!
BUT HOW DO YOU SHOOT DOWN A GOD ENDOWED WITH SUPER POWERS, SPECIALLY ONE WITH A LEG OF HEAVY STEEL...
A STUPID GAME, BUT STILL RATHER GRIPPING, ODDLY ENOUGH.
CLING
THIS 23 INTRIGUES ME... THERE'S SOMETHING NOT HUMAN IN HIS BEHAVIOR...
YES, HIS STRENGTH IS IN FACT QUITE UNCOMMON AND INCOMPATIBLE WITH THAT OF THE INFERIOR RACES DOWN HERE.
I WONDER WHETHER THE CRIMINAL HORUS HASN'T EXCEEDED HIS RIGHTS AND TAKEN POSSESSION OF THE BODY OF A HUMAN... A DEEP PRESENTIMENT OF THIS IS SHAKING ME TO THE CORE...

COME NOW, KHEPRI, UNLESS HIS REASON HAS TOTALLY MALFUNCTIONED, HE CAN NOT HAVE VIOLATED THE ETHICS OF THE MIGHTY TO THIS EXTENT.
KLING
IN ANY CASE, THIS WOULD BE AN EVENT WITHOUT PRECEDENT IN THE UNFATHOMABLE HISTORY OF ETERNITY...
...FROM NOW ON ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH HIM; EVEN DEMATERIALIZING INTO AN INFERIOR, MORTAL BEING... HORUS IS CRAZY, NOBLE FRIENDS...
KLING
THAT'S ALSO MY OPINION, BUT DON'T YOU HEAR SOMETHING THAT KEEPS BANGING AGAINST THE HULL OF OUR VESSEL...?
A METALLIC SOUND, IT SEEMS...
9:38 P.M... TIME CALLED, GAME OVER... THE SCORE 7 TO 4 IN FAVOR OF THE CZECHOSOVIETS...
NOW FOR THE SECOND PHASE.
16
3
CCCP
23
CCP
18
9:39 P.M. JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC, ANGRY AND BITTER, SUDDENLY LEAVES HIS OFFICIAL BOX...
9:40 P.M. END OF THE TELEVISION BROADCAST...
LET'S BE CAREFUL, FRIENDS OF UNIVERSAL HEAVEN, THE MALICIOUSNESS OF HORUS OF HIERAKONOPOLIS IS EQUAL ONLY TO HIS MADNESS...
KLING
KLING
INTERLUDE
THAT ANNOYING NOISE JUST DOESN'T STOP..
BES! GO FIND OUT WHAT THAT NOISE IS!...
NIGHT CAME DOWN HEAVY AND IMPENETRABLE... SWEPT HERE AND THERE BY SULFUROUS WINDS...

10:01 PM.

FLASH SPECIAL

PROUD PARISIANS, GOOD EVENING! A DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS OCCURRED AT THE END OF THE PARIS-BRATISLAVA HOCKEY MATCH... A POLITICALLY DRAMATIC TURN WHICH REFLECTS HONOR ON OUR FASCIST IDEOLOGY AND OUR GOVERNOR JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC.

KLING

MR. MINISTER, YOU WERE PRESENT AT THIS UNPRECEDENTED EVENT. CAN YOU GIVE US THE FACTS OF WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, IT'S QUITE SIMPLE... BOTH TEAMS STARTED TO RETURN TO THEIR LOCKER ROOMS WHEN ONE OF THE CZECHOSOVIETS MANAGED TO GET FREE OF HIS TEAM AND GRABBED HOLD OF A MICROPHONE FROM OUR SECURITY PERSONNEL... HE USED IT TO ASK FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PARIS...

J. R. PHORMHOLTZ
MINISTRE À LA JEUNESSE ET À LA PROPAGANDE

I SUGGEST, MR. MINISTER, THAT WE TAKE A LOOK NOW AT THE FIRST VIDEOTAPE OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY TURNAROUND...

PARISIAN FRIENDS, LISTEN TO ME!!! I CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEFEAT OF YOUR TEAM AND YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT MUST BE GREAT... WELL, AS STRONG AS MY WILL TO WIN...

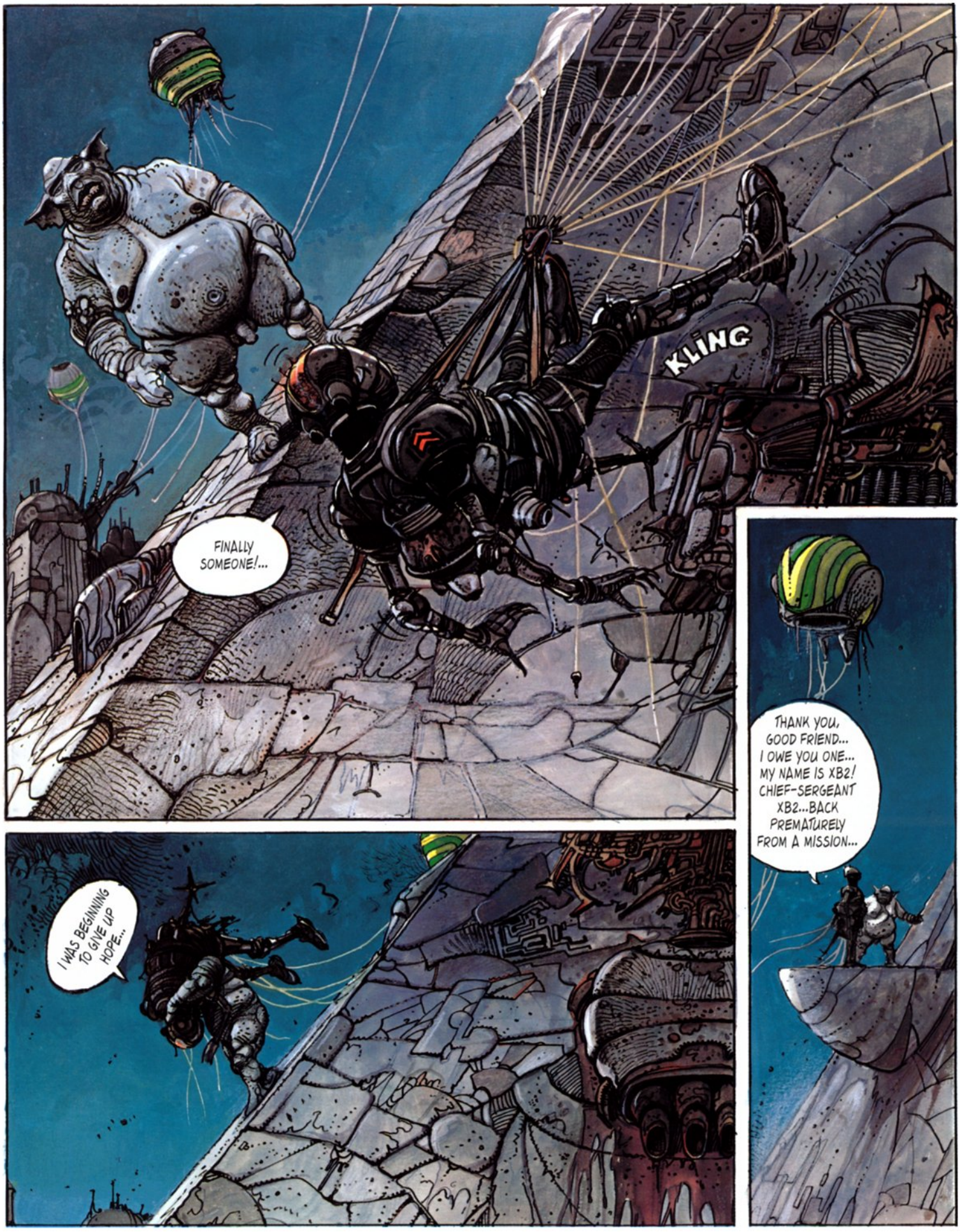
...DURING THIS FIERCE COMPETITION. IT'S EVEN MORE SO NOW THAT I SPEAK TO YOU, AS I DARE TO REPUDIATE MY OWN PEOPLE AND THEIR ARCHAIC REGIME, AND DARE TO ASK YOU AND YOUR RULERS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM!!!

KLING

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

YES... THIS BEHAVIOR ONLY CONFIRMS OUR SUSPICIONS...

AND BES WHO HASN'T COME BACK YET...


KLING
FINALLY SOMEONE!...
I WAS BEGINNING TO GIVE UP HOPE...
THANK YOU, GOOD FRIEND... I OWE YOU ONE... MY NAME IS XB2! CHIEF-SERGEANT XB2...BACK PREMATURELY FROM A MISSION...

PRESS CLIPPINGS PARIS, MARCH 4, 2023.

L'ORDRE

RESOUNDING POLITICAL K.O. TWO MAJOR VICTIMS/ THE TRAITOR VERGOUTTE AND CSECHOSOVIETISM!!!

CHOUBLANQUISM TRIUMPHANT

"LA VOIX LÉGALE"

Extraordinary night at the sports and convention center, where, despite a relative athletic defeat for our team, Choublanquism came up politically stronger and ideologically greater due to two astounding events:
– the death of the dirty traitor Vertegoutte in his attempt on the governor's life
– the demand for political asylum and rejection of the "archaic" regime by a czechosoviet hockey player.

story and photos on pages 2 and 3

SENSE OF HONOR

Pierre-Hubert Burburtz, head coach of the Paris Black Arrows, committed suicide yesterday evening in the locker room lavatory of the sports and convention center... before impaling himself on a crucifix, he declared: "better death than defeat." Pierre-Hubert Burburtz was 33 years old.

L'ORDRE

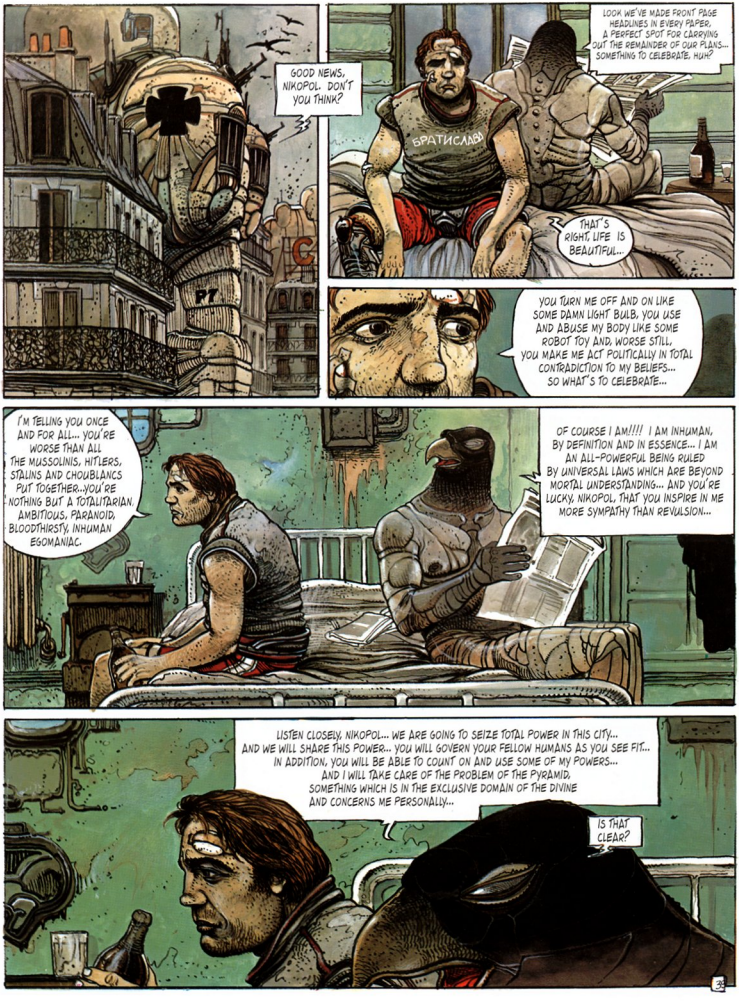
NEWS ITEM

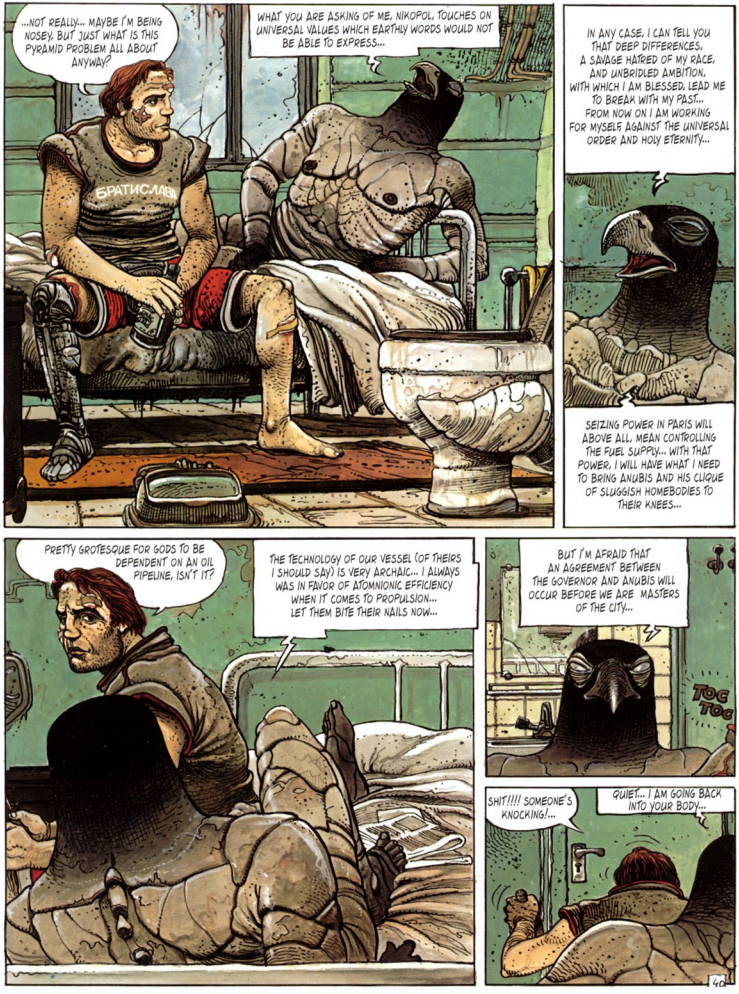
MILITIAMAN EATEN BY RAW MENKAR EGG

An accident which was both stupid and dramatic took place in a Menkar hard-boiled egg warehouse, rue du Theatre, in the second sector.
Either on purpose or accidentally, one of the eggs (6 feet high) had not been hard-boiled and suddenly hatched while 27 worker creatures were leaving the warehouse. Quickly alerted, a detachment of Militiamen engaged the hideous beast, now freed from its shell, in a fierce battle during which one of the representatives of law and order was eaten alive.
In record time, the horrible monster claimed 26 victims, one of whom was the brave corporal Etienne Robuelles. An inquest has been opened to determine clearly who are responsible for this unfortunate affair...

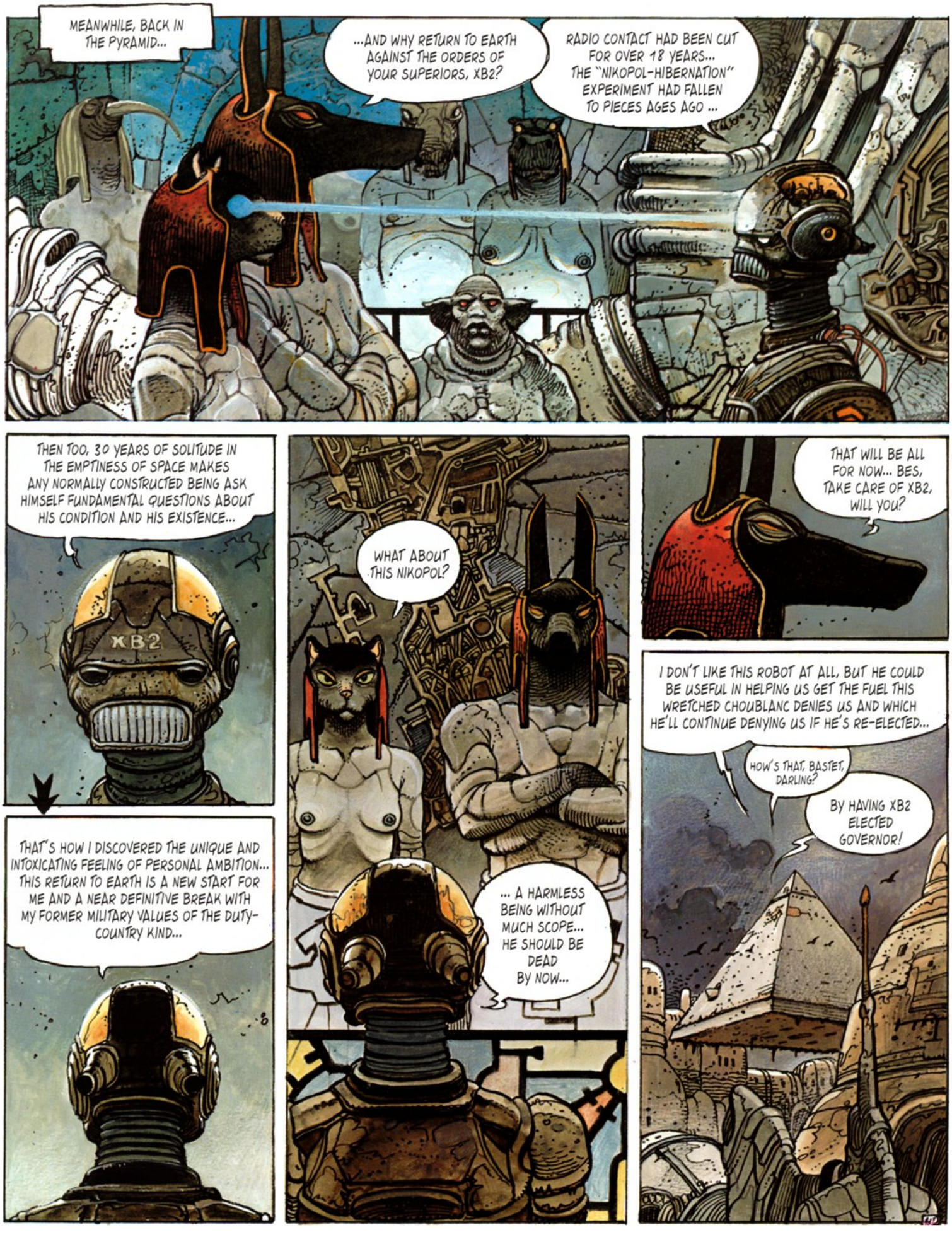
Photos of the drama on page 10

AUTHOR'S NOTE: "PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE" WILL UNFORTUNATELY NO LONGER BE PUBLISHED... ITS SOLE EDITOR-PRINTER-DISTRIBUTOR WAS ONE OF THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF THE CRAZY MENKAR EGG...


GOOD NEWS, NIKOPOL. DON'T YOU THINK?
БРАТИСЛАВ
LOOK WE'VE MADE FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN EVERY PAPER. A PERFECT SPOT FOR CARRYING OUT THE REMAINDER OF OUR PLANS... SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE. HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT, LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL...
YOU TURN ME OFF AND ON LIKE SOME DAMN LIGHT BULB. YOU USE AND ABUSE MY BODY LIKE SOME ROBOT TOY AND, WORSE STILL, YOU MAKE ME ACT POLITICALLY IN TOTAL CONTRADICTION TO MY BELIEFS... SO WHAT'S TO CELEBRATE...
I'M TELLING YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL... YOU'RE WORSE THAN ALL THE MUSSOLINIS, HITLERS, STALINS AND CHOUBLANCS PUT TOGETHER...YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A TOTALITARIAN AMBITIOUS, PARANOID, BLOODTHIRSTY, INHUMAN EGOMANIAC.
OF COURSE I AM!!!! I AM INHUMAN, BY DEFINITION AND IN ESSENCE... I AM AN ALL-POWERFUL BEING RULED BY UNIVERSAL LAWS WHICH ARE BEYOND MORTAL UNDERSTANDING... AND YOU'RE LUCKY, NIKOPOL, THAT YOU INSPIRE IN ME MORE SYMPATHY THAN REVULSION...
LISTEN CLOSELY, NIKOPOL... WE ARE GOING TO SEIZE TOTAL POWER IN THIS CITY... AND WE WILL SHARE THIS POWER... YOU WILL GOVERN YOUR FELLOW HUMANS AS YOU SEE FIT... IN ADDITION, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO COUNT ON AND USE SOME OF MY POWERS... AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM OF THE PYRAMID, SOMETHING WHICH IS IN THE EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN OF THE DIVINE AND CONCERNS ME PERSONALLY...
IS THAT CLEAR?


...NOT REALLY... MAYBE I'M BEING NOSEY, BUT JUST WHAT IS THIS PYRAMID PROBLEM ALL ABOUT ANYWAY?
WHAT YOU ARE ASKING OF ME, NIKOPOL, TOUCHES ON UNIVERSAL VALUES WHICH EARTHLY WORDS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO EXPRESS...
БРАТИСЛАВА
IN ANY CASE, I CAN TELL YOU THAT DEEP DIFFERENCES, A SAVAGE HATRED OF MY RACE, AND UNBRIDLED AMBITION, WITH WHICH I AM BLESSED, LEAD ME TO BREAK WITH MY PAST... FROM NOW ON I AM WORKING FOR MYSELF AGAINST THE UNIVERSAL ORDER AND HOLY ETERNITY...
SEIZING POWER IN PARIS WILL ABOVE ALL, MEAN CONTROLLING THE FUEL SUPPLY... WITH THAT POWER, I WILL HAVE WHAT I NEED TO BRING ANUBIS AND HIS CLIQUE OF SLUGGISH HOMEBODIES TO THEIR KNEES...
PRETTY GROTESQUE FOR GODS TO BE DEPENDENT ON AN OIL PIPELINE, ISN'T IT?
THE TECHNOLOGY OF OUR VESSEL (OF THEIRS I SHOULD SAY) IS VERY ARCHAIC... I ALWAYS WAS IN FAVOR OF ATOMNIONIC EFFICIENCY WHEN IT COMES TO PROPULSION... LET THEM BITE THEIR NAILS NOW...
BUT I'M AFRAID THAT AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND ANUBIS WILL OCCUR BEFORE WE ARE MASTERS OF THE CITY...
TOC TOC
SHIT!!!! SOMEONE'S KNOCKING!...
QUIET... I AM GOING BACK INTO YOUR BODY...
40

VLOUFFF
...YOU WERE TALKING TO YOURSELF?
UH... NO... I WAS RECITING A POEM BY BAUDELAIRE... I LIKE THAT STUFF A LOT, DON'T YOU?
"REMEMBER, MY SOUL, THE THING WE SAW THAT LOVELY SUMMER MORNING, OFF THE PATH A FOUL CARCASS LAY ON A BED STREWN WITH... "
THAT'S ENOUGH!!! CLEAN UP, SHAVE AND PUT ON THESE CLOTHES. THE GOVERNOR WANTS TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE PRESS...
WELL DONE, NIKOPOL!
HIDE YOUR LEG!!!
TOC TOC TOC
UH, COME IN!!!
MEANWHILE, 2ND SECTOR, ALESIA QUARTER, CEMETARY SUPERMARKET...
SAY THERE, YOU AGAIN, MISTAH NIKOPOL!?!
?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ME AGAIN?
LINGERIE
YA BEN HERE YEZADAY, MISTAH NIKOPOL, YA DON'T REMEMBER?
NO! NO, I DON'T REMEMBER BEING HERE YESTERDAY, GORGON, MY POOR OLD FRIEND...

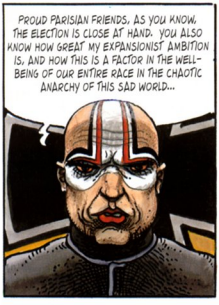

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE PYRAMID...
...AND WHY RETURN TO EARTH AGAINST THE ORDERS OF YOUR SUPERIORS, XB2?
RADIO CONTACT HAD BEEN CUT FOR OVER 18 YEARS... THE "NIKOPOL-HIBERNATION" EXPERIMENT HAD FALLEN TO PIECES AGES AGO ...
THEN TOO, 30 YEARS OF SOLITUDE IN THE EMPTINESS OF SPACE MAKES ANY NORMALLY CONSTRUCTED BEING ASK HIMSELF FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS CONDITION AND HIS EXISTENCE...
XB2
THAT'S HOW I DISCOVERED THE UNIQUE AND INTOXICATING FEELING OF PERSONAL AMBITION... THIS RETURN TO EARTH IS A NEW START FOR ME AND A NEAR DEFINITIVE BREAK WITH MY FORMER MILITARY VALUES OF THE DUTY-COUNTRY KIND...
WHAT ABOUT THIS NIKOPOL?
... A HARMLESS BEING WITHOUT MUCH SCOPE... HE SHOULD BE DEAD BY NOW...
THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW... BES, TAKE CARE OF XB2, WILL YOU?
I DON'T LIKE THIS ROBOT AT ALL, BUT HE COULD BE USEFUL IN HELPING US GET THE FUEL THIS WRETCHED CHOUBLANC DENIES US AND WHICH HE'LL CONTINUE DENYING US IF HE'S RE-ELECTED...
HOW'S THAT, BASTET, DARLING?
BY HAVING XB2 ELECTED GOVERNOR!

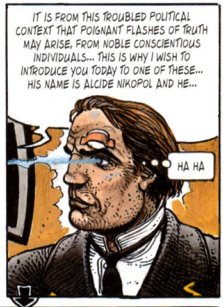
RIDICULOUS!!! LOOK WHAT I LOOK LIKE IN THIS THING!?
SO, ONCE YOU'RE IN POWER YOU CAN MAKE OR BREAK FASHION ACCORDING TO YOUR WHIMS...
FASTER! THE GOVERNOR DOES NOT LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING!
"LEGS IN THE AIR, LIKE A WHORE, BURNING AND SWEATING POISONS, STRETCHING OUT CASUALLY, CYNICALLY, HER BELLY SWOLLEN WITH FOUL GAS...
...YET YOU WILL COME TO THIS OFFENSE, LIKE THIS FILTHY DECAY, STAR OF MY EYES, SUN OF MY SOUL, YOU, MY ANGEL, MY PASSION..."

NOW COMES THE SERIOUS PART, NIKOPOL...
I'VE GOT A HEADACHE...
A STROKE OF FATE, THIS DISSIDENT... I MUST GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS AFFAIR, CREATE AN EVENT AROUND THIS ACT OF HIS AND THE POLITICS WHICH ACCOMPANY IT... WE COULDN'T HAVE DREAMED UP A BETTER THEME FOR MY CAMPAIGN...
EVERYTHING HAS BEEN PLANNED WITH THIS IN MIND... ALSO, YOUR BROTHER, HIS HOLINESS THEODULE I, WILL BE BACKING YOU... IN A SPECTACULAR WAY, HE'S TOLD ME... THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING NO ONE WILL DARE ENTER THE RACE AGAINST YOU...
HMMM... THAT WOULD MAKE THINGS A LOT SIMPLER... I'VE GOT OTHER IRONS IN THE FIRE, YOU KNOW...
QUIET, GOGOL, QUIET...
THAT ANUBIS AND HIS ADVISORS ARE THE ONES WHO'LL BE DISAPPOINTED WHEN I'M RE-ELECTED... I'VE GOT A HUNCH THAT THEIR SITUATION IS NOT QUITE AS COMFORTABLE AS THEY WOULD HAVE ME BELIEVE... THEY'LL BE THE FIRST TO GIVE IN...
...AND WILL MAKE ME IMMORTAL (IF GOD WILLS)
I SO HOPE FOR YOU...

THE DISSIDENT NIKOPOL HAS ARRIVED, GOVERNOR...
HAVE HIM COME IN!
ELYSEE POSTE 1
DEAR FRIEND, I AM HAPPY AND PROUD TO COUNT YOU AMONG MY SUBJECTS... I DEEPLY APPRECIATE YOUR COURAGEOUS AND EXEMPLARY GESTURE, BELIEVE ME... YOU ARE WELCOME HERE...
UH... WE ARE VERY... I MEAN, I AM VERY MOVED BY YOUR HOSPITALITY... ISN'T FREEDOM WORTH SACRIFICING A LITTLE BLOOD AND PAIN?
STOP IT, NIKOPOL!
YOU ARE QUITE POORLY INFORMED, MR. NIKOPOL... OR ELSE YOU'VE GOTTEN THE WRONG ADDRESS... THE CHOUBLANQUIST REGIME IS ONE OF THE MOST BRUTAL IN ALL EUROPE, PERHAPS EVEN IN WHAT'S LEFT OF THE SAFE WORLD...
THAT'S ENOUGH, AURELIEN!!!
I HAVE A TELEVISED DECLARATION TO MAKE, DEAR FRIEND, AND I THINK IT AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR CITY... WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT YOU ARE ALREADY PERCEIVED AS A HERO BY MY SUBJECTS... AND DICTATORSHIP, WHICH AS YOU KNOW IS A VERY DIFFICULT ART, REQUIRES ARTISTS OF YOUR CALIBER...
YOU HONOR ME MUCH...
THINGS ARE GOING RATHER WELL, NIKOPOL... I THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO SKIP A FEW STEPS...
I CAN SEE YOU WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE OR IN PROPAGANDA OR SPORTS, AND WITH FERVOR... A DYNAMIC AND GENEROUS POSITION FOR YOU... MADE IN YOUR OWN IMAGE...
I AM TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR BRAIN FUNCTIONS FOR GREATER SECURITY...
...
BILAL

(BE VERY CAREFUL... GOGOL SEEMS ABNORMALLY DISTURBED BY THIS NIKOPOL... HE FINDS HIM TO BE AN ODDLY AMBIGUOUS DUAL PERSONALITY, SEETHING WITH UNBRIDLED AMBITION...)
(I DON'T LIKE HIM EITHER... BUT DON'T BE AFRAID, HE WON'T GET A WORD IN...)
THEY'RE ON THEIR GUARD... THE TELEPATHIC CAT HAS ALERTED THEM... BUT TOO LATE, I FEAR, FOR THEM...

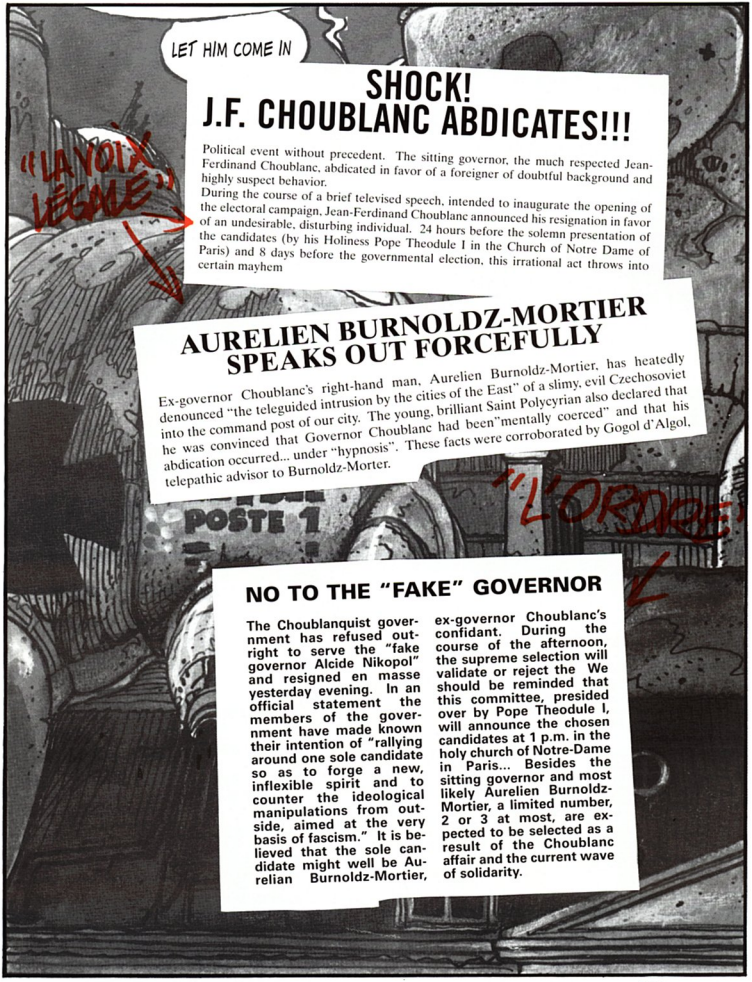

PROUD PARISIAN FRIENDS, AS YOU KNOW, THE ELECTION IS CLOSE AT HAND. YOU ALSO KNOW HOW GREAT MY EXPANSIONIST AMBITION IS, AND HOW THIS IS A FACTOR IN THE WELL-BEING OF OUR ENTIRE RACE IN THE CHAOTIC ANARCHY OF THIS SAD WORLD...


IT IS FROM THIS TROUBLED POLITICAL CONTEXT THAT POIGNANT FLASHES OF TRUTH MAY ARISE, FROM NOBLE CONSCIENTIOUS INDIVIDUALS... THIS IS WHY I WISH TO INTRODUCE YOU TODAY TO ONE OF THESE... HIS NAME IS ALCIDE NIKOPOL AND HE...
HA HA

...

...HE REPRESENTS THE FUTURE OF OUR DEEPEST HOPES... SO IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL OF US THAT I SOLEMNLY ANNOUNCE TO YOU, PARISIAN CITIZENS, MY ABDICATION IN HIS FAVOR AND MY UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR HIS CANDIDACY!
SHIT! HE'S GONE OUT OF HIS MIND! CUT!!!

GOVERNOR!!? DO YOU REALIZE...
SILENCE! I ABDICATE, I SAID!!!
AND BINGO, WE'RE GOVERNOR...
AAAAAHHH
GOGOL !!!
FOUL BEAST!
MY ABDICATION WILL BE LEGALIZED TODAY! MR. NIKOPOL, THE NEW GOVERNOR OF PARIS, WILL ENDEAVOR TO CONTINUE IN THE PATH LAID OUT BY ME. BUT WILL BE FREE TO DISSOLVE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT UPON HIS RE-ELECTION, IF HE DEEMS IT NECESSARY...
YOU AURELIAN AND YOU GOGOL ARE FIRED! AND I, IF GOD WILLS, SHALL ENTER INTO THE RANKS OF THE ETERNAL SAINTS WHERE MY SOUL, RATHER THAN MY BODY, WILL BE IMMORTAL... NOW LET ME MEDITATE...
NOT VERY BELIEVABLE. THIS SEIZING OF POWER, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
EHH....
GRRR...
THIS IS A NASTY TWIST, CHOUBLANC! THEY'VE MADE YOU LOSE YOUR MIND AS WELL AS POWER ! BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T WON, MR. NIKOPOL!!!



SHOCK! J.F. CHOUBLANC ABDICATES!!!

Political event without precedent. The sitting governor, the much respected Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc, abdicated in favor of a foreigner of doubtful background and highly suspect behavior.

During the course of a brief televised speech, intended to inaugurate the opening of the electoral campaign, Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc announced his resignation in favor of an undesirable, disturbing individual. 24 hours before the solemn presentation of the candidates (by his Holiness Pope Theodule I in the Church of Notre Dame of Paris) and 8 days before the governmental election, this irrational act throws into certain mayhem

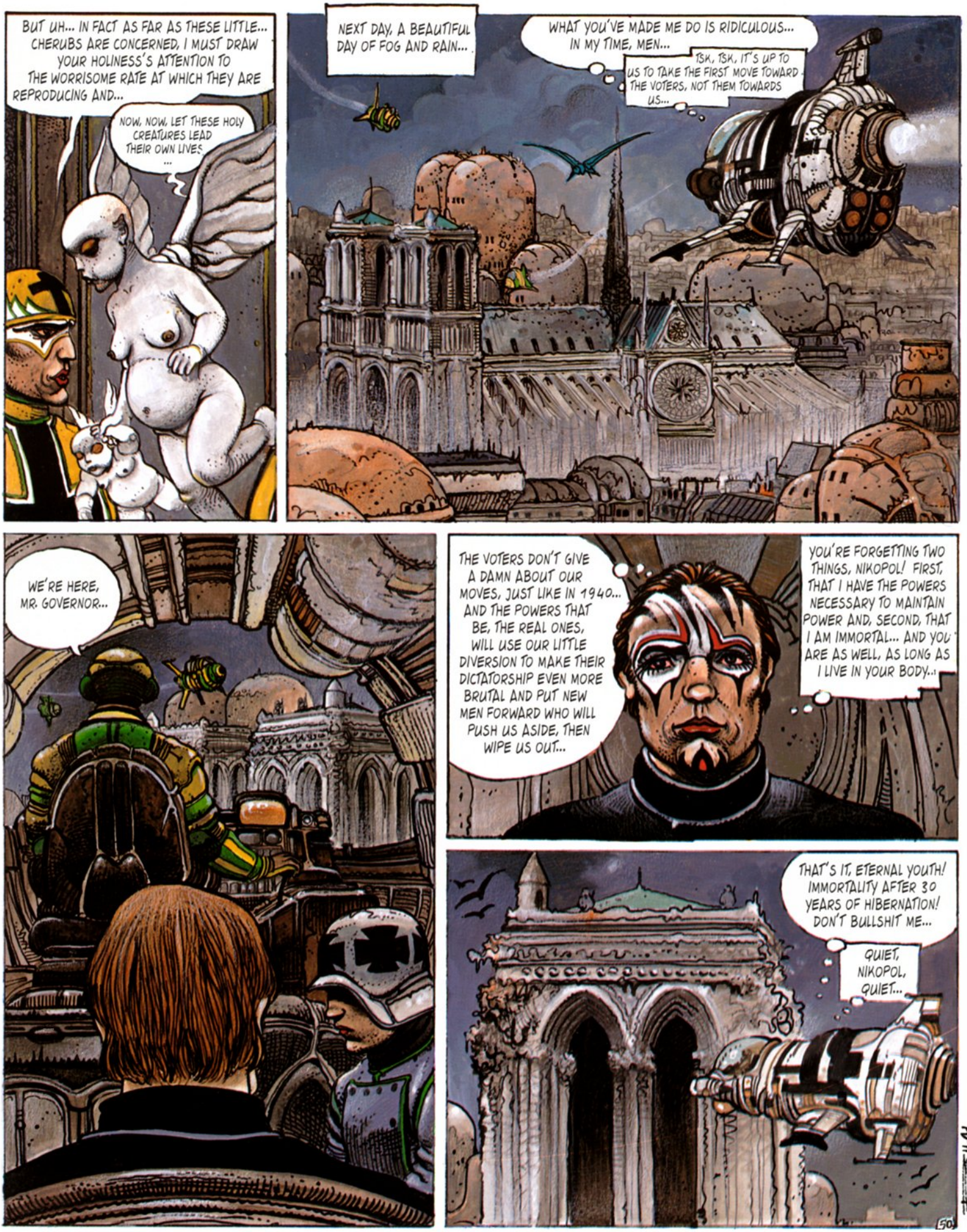
AURELIEN BURNOLDZ-MORTIER SPEAKS OUT FORCEFULLY

Ex-governor Choublanc's right-hand man, Aurelien Burnoldz-Mortier, has heatedly denounced "the teleguided intrusion by the cities of the East" of a slimy, evil Czechosoviet into the command post of our city. The young, brilliant Saint Polycyrian also declared that he was convinced that Governor Choublanc had been"mentally coerced" and that his abdication occurred... under "hypnosis". These facts were corroborated by Gogol d'Algol, telepathic advisor to Burnoldz-Morter.

NO TO THE "FAKE" GOVERNOR

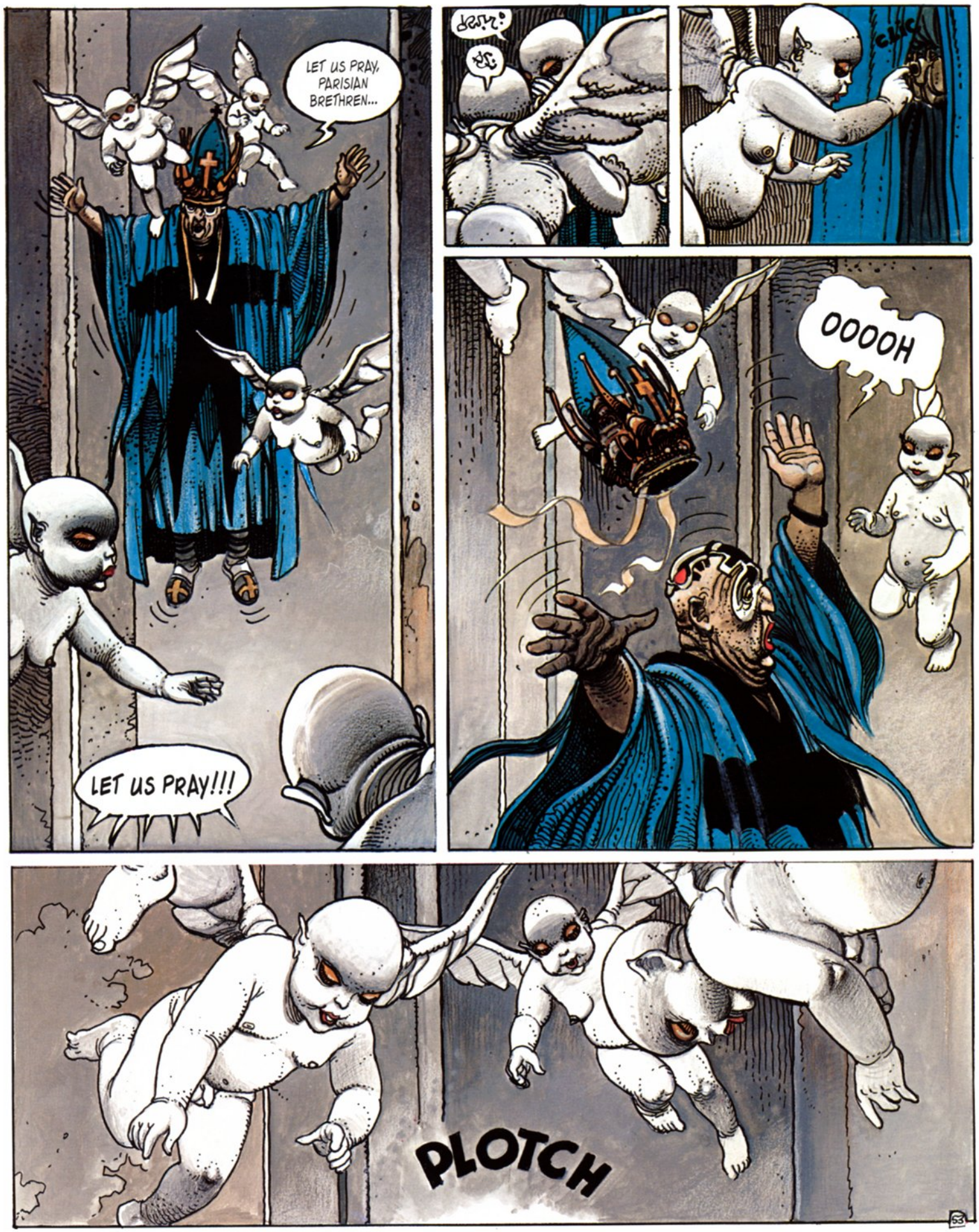
The Choublanquist government has refused outright to serve the "fake governor Alcide Nikopol" and resigned en masse yesterday evening. In an official statement the members of the government have made known their intention of "rallying around one sole candidate so as to forge a new, inflexible spirit and to counter the ideological manipulations from outside, aimed at the very basis of fascism." It is believed that the sole candidate might well be Aurelian Burnoldz-Mortier, ex-governor Choublanc's confidant. During the course of the afternoon, the supreme selection will validate or reject the We should be reminded that this committee, presided over by Pope Theodule I, will announce the chosen candidates at 1 p.m. in the holy church of Notre-Dame in Paris... Besides the sitting governor and most likely Aurelien Burnoldz-Mortier, a limited number, 2 or 3 at most, are expected to be selected as a result of the Choublanc affair and the current wave of solidarity.

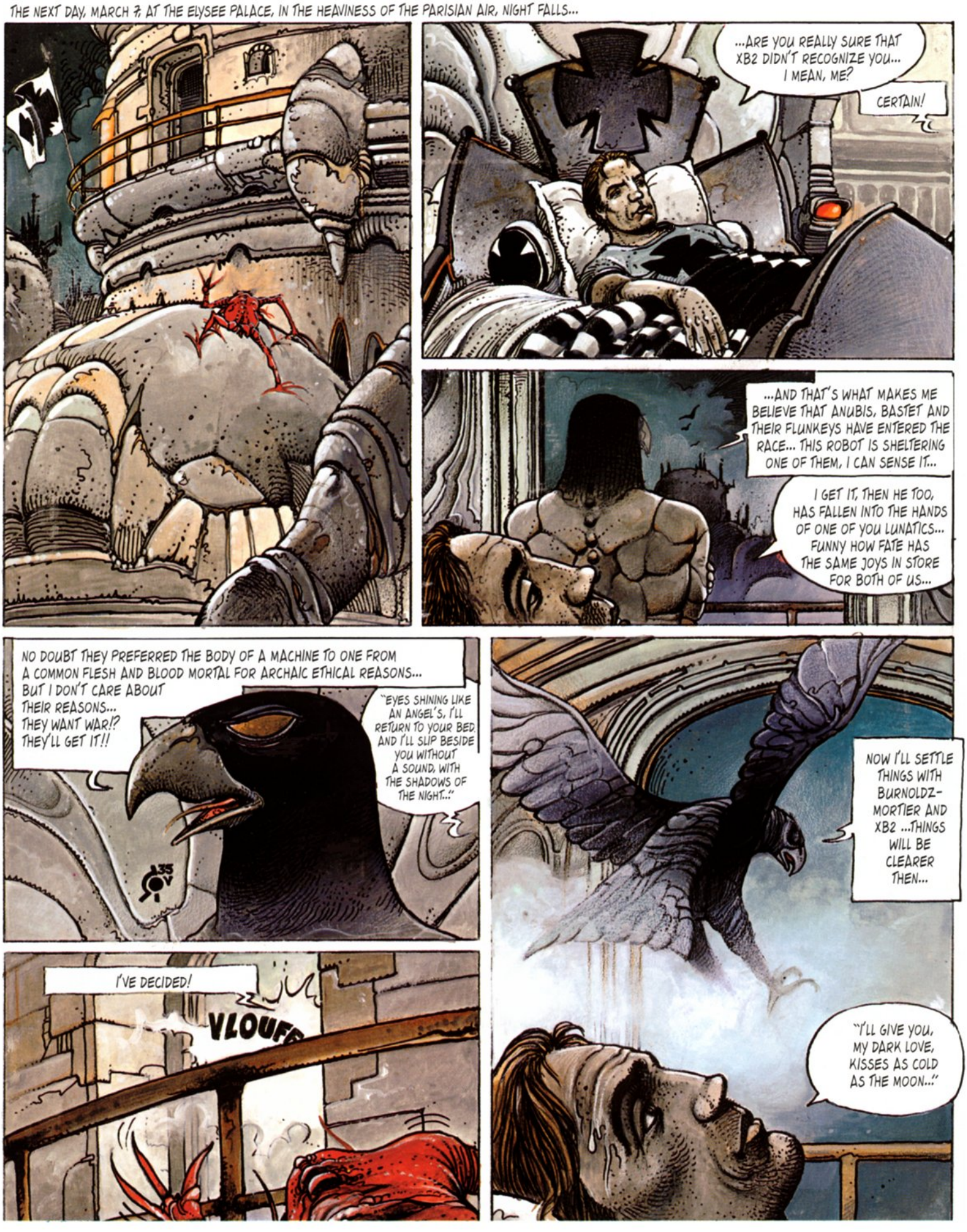
NOT EXACTLY THE WARMEST WELCOME FROM THE PRESS, IS IT? THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY I CAN SEE THAT YOU CAN HOLD ONTO THIS POWER YOU SO CLEVERLY SEIZED... HYPNOTIZE THE ENTIRE VOTING POPULATION...
ENOUGH SARCASM, NIKOPOL! I HAVE MORE WAYS OF MAKING MORE MORTALS SEE REASON THAN EXIST IN THIS ENTIRE CITY... BUT I DON'T PLAN TO USE THEM EXCEPT AS A LAST RESORT...
FOR STARTERS, I'LL BE CONTENT JUST TO ELIMINATE THE ONE OR MORE CANDIDATES PHYSICALLY... ONCE ALONE ON THE BALLOT WE'LL BE SURE TO BE RE-ELECTED...
TOMORROW WE'LL KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR OPTIONS...
SAY, YOU'VE GOT SO MUCH POWER, DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING FOR SPLITTING MIGRAINES?
NEARBY IN THE SUITE OF HIS HOLINESS THEODULE I...
...HE SAYS THAT THE LEVITATOR IS READY AND THAT HE CAN GIVE YOU A DEMONSTRATION IF YOU WISH...
NO POINT... THE INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE ENOUGH...
YOUR HOLINESS WILL BE ABLE TO RISE NEARBY 24 FEET OFF THE GROUND. HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW, AND WITH NO RISK... TO GET DOWN, YOU ONLY HAVE TO PRESS A BUTTON ...
THAT'S PERFECT... I THINK THIS IS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO REINFORCE MY IMAGE AND MY CREDIBILITY IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES ... THE CHURCH MUST BE EXALTED BY MY ACT... I WANT THIS "SUSPENSION" OVER THE GROUND TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO A FORM OF DIVINE GRACE, A KIND OF MIRACLE... WITH THESE LITTLE CHERUBS SPINNING AROUND ME, THE PICTURE WILL BE TOUCHING AND CONVINCING, I THINK.
I THINK SO TOO, YOUR HOLINESS...


BUT UH... IN FACT AS FAR AS THESE LITTLE... CHERUBS ARE CONCERNED, I MUST DRAW YOUR HOLINESS'S ATTENTION TO THE WORRISOME RATE AT WHICH THEY ARE REPRODUCING AND...
NOW, NOW, LET THESE HOLY CREATURES LEAD THEIR OWN LIVES...
NEXT DAY, A BEAUTIFUL DAY OF FOG AND RAIN...
WHAT YOU'VE MADE ME DO IS RIDICULOUS... IN MY TIME, MEN...
TSK, TSK, IT'S UP TO US TO TAKE THE FIRST MOVE TOWARD THE VOTERS, NOT THEM TOWARDS US...
WE'RE HERE, MR. GOVERNOR...
THE VOTERS DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT OUR MOVES, JUST LIKE IN 1940... AND THE POWERS THAT BE, THE REAL ONES, WILL USE OUR LITTLE DIVERSION TO MAKE THEIR DICTATORSHIP EVEN MORE BRUTAL AND PUT NEW MEN FORWARD WHO WILL PUSH US ASIDE, THEN WIPE US OUT...
YOU'RE FORGETTING TWO THINGS, NIKOPOL! FIRST, THAT I HAVE THE POWERS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN POWER AND, SECOND, THAT I AM IMMORTAL... AND YOU ARE AS WELL, AS LONG AS I LIVE IN YOUR BODY...
THAT'S IT, ETERNAL YOUTH! IMMORTALITY AFTER 30 YEARS OF HIBERNATION! DON'T BULLSHIT ME...
QUIET, NIKOPOL, QUIET...
50

THIS WAY, GOVERNOR.
MY ADVERSARIES HAVE ARRIVED?
OOOH... MY HEAD...
THEY'RE HERE, MR. GOVERNOR...
HOW MANY ARE THERE?
ONLY TWO... THE SELECTION COMMITTEE HAS BEEN VERY STRICT...
PERFECT!
WE'LL BE ABLE TO CRUSH THEM THAT MUCH EASIER... I ALREADY SEE BURNOLDZ-MORTIER... I WONDER WHO THE SECOND CANDIDATE IS...
DON'T GIVE A SHIT... OOOH... DISCONNECT ME... I'M GOING TO EXPLODE...
BE ON YOUR GUARD... HERE'S THE GOVERNOR...
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. GOGOL KEEPS AN ANTI-HYPNOTIC SCREEN AROUND ME...
WHAT IS THE MACHINE ON LEGS?
UH... ONE OF THE CANDIDATES, MR. GOVERNOR.
IT'S THAT PILE OF RUSTY METAL THAT WORRIES ME... STILL NO WORD AS TO HOW IT GOT ITSELF SELECTED?
NO... BUT HERE AGAIN I SUSPECT A HYPNOTIZING KIND OF ACTION OVER THE WHOLE SELECTION COMMITTEE AND THE POPE AS WELL..
MR. XB2, YOU SAY?
YES.
WELL, WELL...

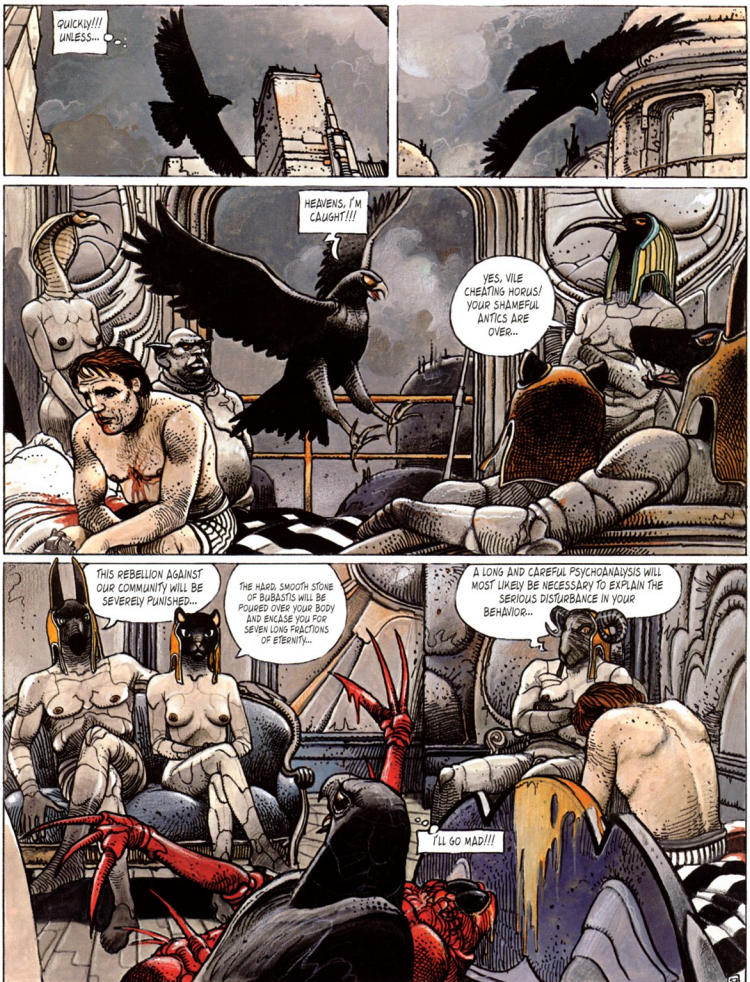
THAT'S ODD... I SENSE A MENTAL BARRIER ON EACH SIDE OE ME... THE TELEPATHIC CAT'S WAS TO BE EXPECTED...
...BUT I DON'T LIKE THE ROBOT'S AT ALL...
HEY, NIKOPOL, WAKE UP..
AAAAAH..
XB2
...MY HEAD...
TAKE A DISCREET LOOK TO YOUR LEFT AND TRY TO STAY CALM...
SHIT!!!
STAY CALM I SAID...
XB2! CHIEF-SERGEANT XB2! WHAT THE HELL'S HE DOING HERE!??
THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KONW...
BNNNNN
...SO IT IS IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY WHO GUIDES OUR HEALTHY AND HOLY CITY WITH HIS LIGHT THAT TODAY I AM CALLED UPON TO INTRODUCE TO YOU THE THREE CANDIDATES SELECTED TO RUN AGAINST EACH OTHER DURING THE UPCOMING ELECTORAL RACE...
BUT NOW LET US RAISE OURSELVES UP TOGETHER IN FERVENT PRAYER FOR OUR GLORIOUS CITY AND THE ALMIGHTY, ITS PROTECTOR...
OOOOH!!!?
HURRAY!!!
HE'S RISING!!!
IT'S A MIRACLE!!
ANOTHER ONE!!!

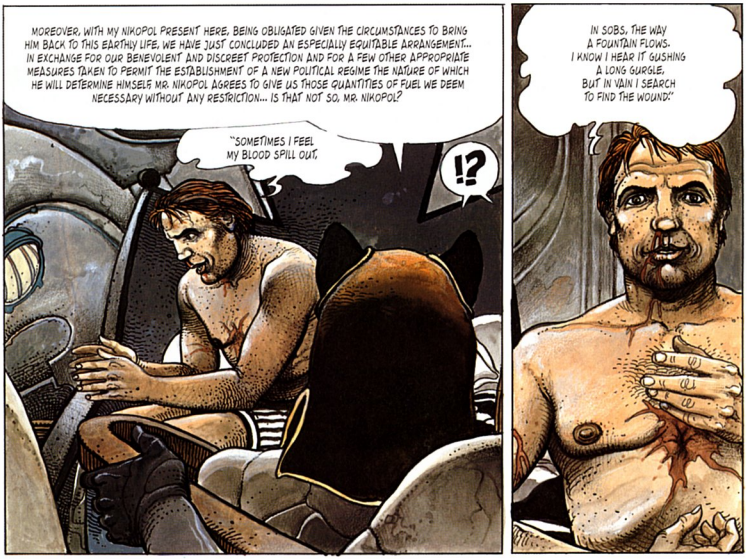

LET US PRAY, PARISIAN BRETHREN...
LET US PRAY!!!
CLIC
OOOOH
PLOTCH


THE NEXT DAY, MARCH 7, AT THE ELYSEE PALACE, IN THE HEAVINESS OF THE PARISIAN AIR, NIGHT FALLS...
...ARE YOU REALLY SURE THAT XB2 DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU... I MEAN, ME?
CERTAIN!
...AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME BELIEVE THAT ANUBIS, BASTET AND THEIR FLUNKEYS HAVE ENTERED THE RACE... THIS ROBOT IS SHELTERING ONE OF THEM, I CAN SENSE IT...
I GET IT, THEN HE TOO, HAS FALLEN INTO THE HANDS OF ONE OF YOU LUNATICS... FUNNY HOW FATE HAS THE SAME JOYS IN STORE FOR BOTH OF US...
NO DOUBT THEY PREFERRED THE BODY OF A MACHINE TO ONE FROM A COMMON FLESH AND BLOOD MORTAL FOR ARCHAIC ETHICAL REASONS... BUT I DON'T CARE ABOUT THEIR REASONS... THEY WANT WAR!? THEY'LL GET IT!!
"EYES SHINING LIKE AN ANGEL'S, I'LL RETURN TO YOUR BED AND I'LL SLIP BESIDE YOU WITHOUT A SOUND, WITH THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT..."
NOW I'LL SETTLE THINGS WITH BURNOLDZ-MORTIER AND XB2 ...THINGS WILL BE CLEARER THEN...
"I'LL GIVE YOU, MY DARK LOVE, KISSES AS COLD AS THE MOON..."
I'VE DECIDED!
VLOUF

"... AND CARESSES LIKE A SNAKE COILING OVER AN OPEN GRAVE..."
"WHEN MORNING WHITENS YOU WILL FIND MY PLACE EMPTY, UNTIL NIGHT IT WILL BE COLD..."
"AS OTHERS BY FONDNESS ON... AAAGH!!!
QUICKLY, BASTET!!!
DIRTY BEAST...
TCHAAC
AARGLÄ...

A SUPERB NIGHT AHEAD OF US... SHALL WE DRINK TO YOUR SUCCESS, MY DEAR AURELIEN, AND TO A RENEWED ORDER?
CERTAINLY, NOBLE FRIEND... ALL I'M WAITING FOR NOW IS WORD THAT THERE ARE NO MORE "OBSTACLES" IN MY PATH...
THERE HE IS...
BY NOW GOGOL'S AL WAZORIEN GUARDS SHOULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS...
HA HA. ONE DOWN!!!
AAAA !!!
NOW THE OTHER ONE...
!?!
BY SETH, THE EVIL ONE!!! SOMEONE GOT HERE AHEAD OF ME...
SUDDENLY I FEEL A DEEP FOREBODING...


QUICKLY!!! UNLESS...
HEAVENS, I'M CAUGHT!!!
YES, VILE CHEATING HORUS! YOUR SHAMEFUL ANTICS ARE OVER...
THIS REBELLION AGAINST OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED...
THE HARD, SMOOTH STONE OF BUBASTIS WILL BE POURED OVER YOUR BODY AND ENCASE YOU FOR SEVEN LONG FRACTIONS OF ETERNITY...
A LONG AND CAREFUL PSYCHOANAYSIS WILL MOST LIKELY BE NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THE SERIOUS DISTURBANCE IN YOUR BEHAVIOR...
I'LL GO MAD!!!


MOREOVER, WITH MY NIKOPOL PRESENT HERE, BEING OBLIGATED GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO BRING HIM BACK TO THIS EARTHLY LIFE, WE HAVE JUST CONCLUDED AN ESPECIALLY EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENT... IN EXCHANGE FOR OUR BENEVOLENT AND DISCREET PROTECTION AND FOR A FEW OTHER APPROPRIATE MEASURES TAKEN TO PERMIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW POLITICAL REGIME THE NATURE OF WHICH HE WILL DETERMINE HIMSELF, MR. NIKOPOL AGREES TO GIVE US THOSE QUANTITIES OF FUEL WE DEEM NECESSARY WITHOUT ANY RESTRICTION... IS THAT NOT SO, MR. NIKOPOL?
"SOMETIMES I FEEL MY BLOOD SPILL OUT,
!?
IN SOBS, THE WAY A FOUNTAIN FLOWS. I KNOW I HEAR IT GUSHING A LONG GURGLE, BUT IN VAIN I SEARCH TO FIND THE WOUND."

PARIS, MARCH 23, 2023. PRESS CLIPPINGS.

"L'AIR RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE"

DIFFUSION LÉGALE - TIRAGE 160 000 ex.

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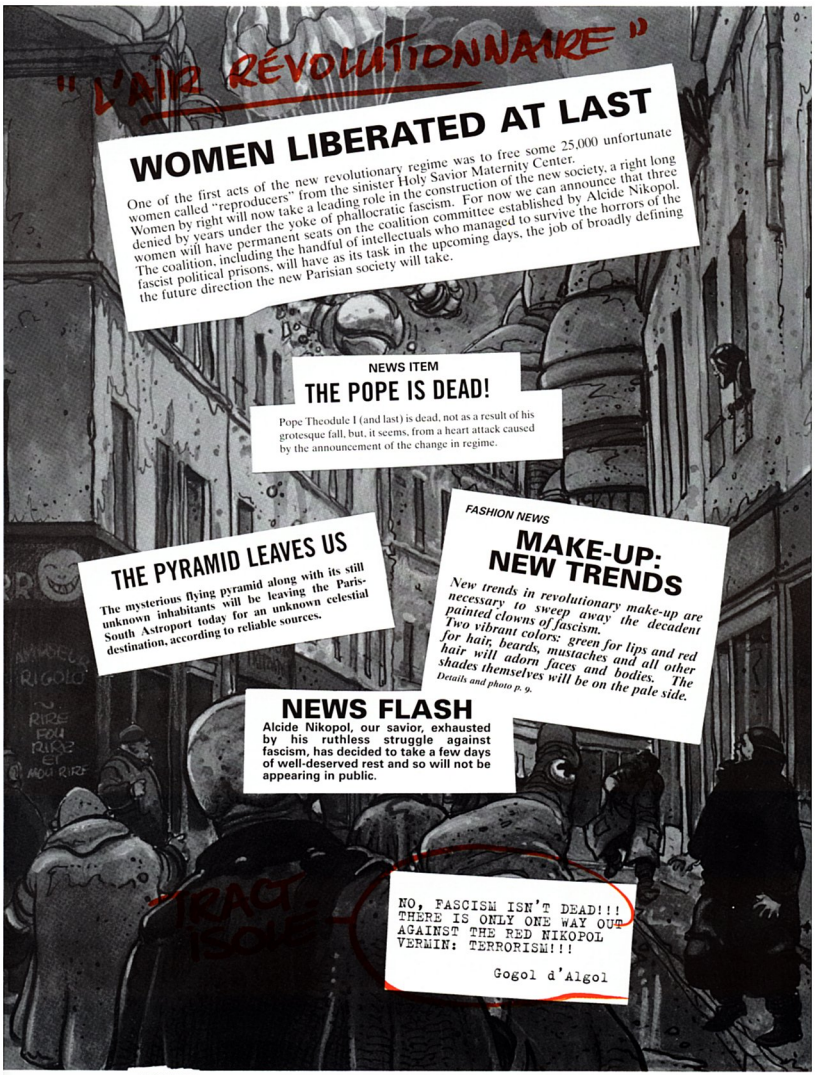
FASCISM IS DEAD LONG LIFE NIKOPOL!

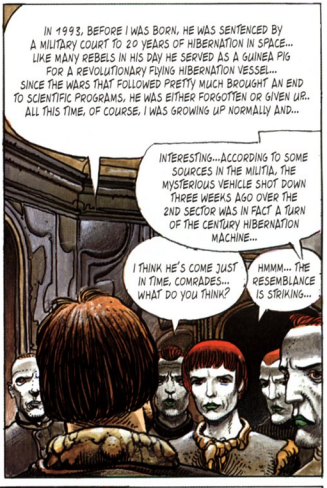
TODAY, MARCH 23, 2023, A HISTORIC DATE, A NEW ERA OF EQUALITY AND REVOLUTIONARY HOPE BEGINS FOR ALL PARISIANS, UNITED AT LAST AS ONE. LET US THANK NIKOPOL, THE LIBERATOR OF PARIS, AND HOPE THAT THE STILL SMOLDERING ASHES OF THE CURSE OF FASCISM WILL BE SCATTERED IN THE WINDS OF HISTORY AND BE BLOTTED OUT FROM OUR TORTURED MEMORIES.


"L'AIR RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE"
WOMEN LIBERATED AT LAST
One of the first acts of the new revolutionary regime was to free some 25,000 unfortunate women called "reproducers" from the sinister Holy Savior Maternity Center. Women by right will now take a leading role in the construction of the new society, a right long denied by years under the yoke of phallocratic fascism. For now we can announce that three women will have permanent seats on the coalition committee established by Alcide Nikopol. The coalition, including the handful of intellectuals who managed to survive the horrors of the fascist political prisons, will have as its task in the upcoming days, the job of broadly defining the future direction the new Parisian society will take.
NEWS ITEM
THE POPE IS DEAD!
Pope Theodule I (and last) is dead, not as a result of his grotesque fall, but, it seems, from a heart attack caused by the announcement of the change in regime.
THE PYRAMID LEAVES US
The mysterious flying pyramid along with its still unknown inhabitants will be leaving the Paris-South Astroport today for an unknown celestial destination, according to reliable sources.
FASHION NEWS
MAKE-UP: NEW TRENDS
New trends in revolutionary make-up are necessary to sweep away the decadent painted clowns of fascism. Two vibrant colors: green for lips and red for hair, beards, mustaches and all other hair will adorn faces and bodies. The shades themselves will be on the pale side.
Details and photo p. 9.
NEWS FLASH
Alcide Nikopol, our savior, exhausted by his ruthless struggle against fascism, has decided to take a few days of well-deserved rest and so will not be appearing in public.
NO, FASCISM ISN'T DEAD!!! THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT AGAINST THE RED NIKOPOL VERMIN: TERRORISM!!!
Gogol d'Algol

THE SAME DAY, ABOVE THE CITY...
RUE DE LA PAIX! I'LL BUY!!!
...IN THE CHAMBERS OF THE ELYSEE PALACE WHERE THE NEWREVO-LUTIONARY POWER IS INSTALLED...
SO, WHAT ARE YOUR CONCLU-SIONS, COMRADE DOCTOR?
IN MY EXPERIENCE, THIS CASE IS WITHOUT PRECEDENT...
CENTRE ST SAUVE
...THE HEADACHES HAVE DISAPPEARED. BUT THE BRAIN SEEMS TO HAVE ACTUALLY COMPRESSED IN VARIOUS PLACES, ALMOST AMPUTATED, ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOTHING ACTUALLY MISSING... IT APPEARS THAT HIS HEART HAS BEEN REBUILT (IN AN INEXPLICABLE WAY) IN THE AFTERMATH OF A RUPTURE CAUSED BY A POINTED INSTRUMENT... AND THEN THERE'S THIS STEEL LEG. A PROSTHESIS I FIND AS RIDICULOUS AS IT IS STRANGE BECAUSE THE VERY WEIGHT OF IT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO MOVE NORMALLY...
BUT THE MOST SERIOUS THING IS THE LOSS OF REASON BECAUSE I DON'T SEE ANY WAY OF RECOVERING THAT... THE POOR PATIENT SPENDS ALL DAY RECITING POETRY BY BAUDELAIRE, FLAT ON HIS BACK, STARING INTO SPACE, OR HE JUST BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER FOR NO REASON...
YEAH... HARD TO CREATE AN IDEOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE PEOPLE...
HA HA HAHAHA HA
THERE HE GOES AGAIN...
ELYSEE
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? ALL PARIS LOOKS TO HIM AS A HERO, A SAVIOR AND THAT CAN'T BE DENIED. HE WAS THE ONE WHO STARTED IT ALL, EVEN IF HIS BEHAVIOR MADE HIS DEEPER POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS QUESTIONABLE...
QUITE A MESS...
OUR POWER IS STILL TOO UNSTABLE TO...
LET ME THROUGH! I'M HIS SON, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
CENTRE ST SAUVEUR
60

A MADMAN WHO...
I AM NIKOPOL, ALCIDE NIKOPOL. ALCIDE NIKOPOL'S SON!
?!!

LISTEN, I KNOW IT MUST SOUND CRAZY THAT HE'S MY FATHER SINCE WE LOOK THE SAME AGE, BUT I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!
GO AHEAD, THEN...


IN 1993, BEFORE I WAS BORN, HE WAS SENTENCED BY A MILITARY COURT TO 20 YEARS OF HIBERNATION IN SPACE... LIKE MANY REBELS IN HIS DAY HE SERVED AS A GUINEA PIG FOR A REVOLUTIONARY FLYING HIBERNATION VESSEL... SINCE THE WARS THAT FOLLOWED PRETTY MUCH BROUGHT AN END TO SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMS, HE WAS EITHER FORGOTTEN OR GIVEN UP.. ALL THIS TIME, OF COURSE, I WAS GROWING UP NORMALLY AND...
INTERESTING...ACCORDING TO SOME SOURCES IN THE MILITIA, THE MYSTERIOUS VEHICLE SHOT DOWN THREE WEEKS AGO OVER THE 2ND SECTOR WAS IN FACT A TURN OF THE CENTURY HIBERNATION MACHINE...
I THINK HE'S COME JUST IN TIME, COMRADES... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HMMM... THE RESEMBLANCE IS STRIKING...

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
COMRADE NIKOPOL, HERE'S... UH, YOUR SON ALCIDE WHO'S AGREED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE WHILE YOU RECOVER SO THAT UH... YOUR PRESENCE BEFORE THE NEW PARISIAN PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE, IN A WAY...
DAD!?

... YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I EXISTED... BUT I REALLY AM YOUR SON... YOURS AND CLEMENTINE MORANIDON'S... !...
"OH YOU...

"...OF THE WISEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ANGELS, GOD BETRAYED BY FATE AND ISOLATED BY PRAISE. OH SATAN, HAVE PITY ON MY LONG DISTRESS!"
DAD...

WEEKS LATER. THE NEW COALITION ORCHESTRATED BY AN UNUSUALLY DETERMINED ALCIDE NIKOPOL, JR. WRESTLES FOR GOOD OR ILL WITH ITS NEW EGALITARIAN SOCIETY...
ALONG WITH ECONOMIC AND ENERGY PROBLEMS HAVE COME THE THREATS OF INTER CITY WARS (ESPECIALLY WITH THE CITIES OF THE NORTH AND WEST).
ALONG WITH PROBLEMS OF CO-EXISTENCE WITH EXTRATERRESTIAL RACES (THE NUMBER OF DIPHDA CHERUBS OCCUPYING NOTRE-DAME OF PARIS GROWS BY THE DAY) HAVE COME TERRORIST ATTACKS BY REGROUPING FASCIST FACTIONS.
FINALLY, ALONG WITH THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM JOINING TOGETHER THE TWO SECTORS HAVE COME TERRIBLE RISKS OF EPIDEMIC AND MUTATIONS (DESPITE THE CLOSING OF THE ASTROPORT AND THE PRAISEWORTHY DISINFECTION CAMPAIGNS).

PARIS 2023, FRAGILE BUT FREE, PREPARES TO SAIL CLOSE TO THE ROCKS ON VERY TROUBLED WATERS WITHOUT ITS LIBERATOR, THE UNFORTUNATE, THE LUCKLESS, THE PITIFUL ALCIDE NIKOPOL.

END.

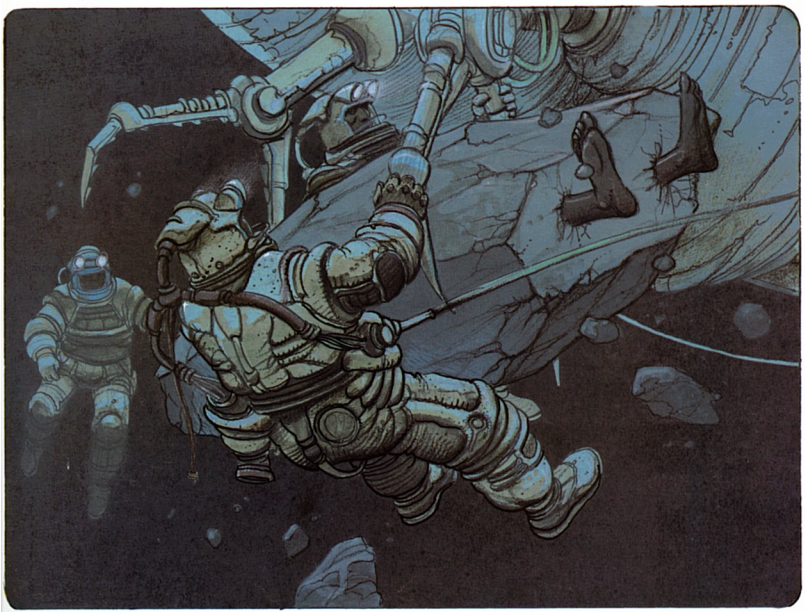
COME NOW, MR. CHOUBLANC! GET DRESSED! YOU'RE GOING TO CATCH COLD!
"YOU WHO KNOW ALL, GREAT RULER OF THE EARTH BELOW, PATIENT HEALER OF HUMAN PAIN,...
WC
A
28

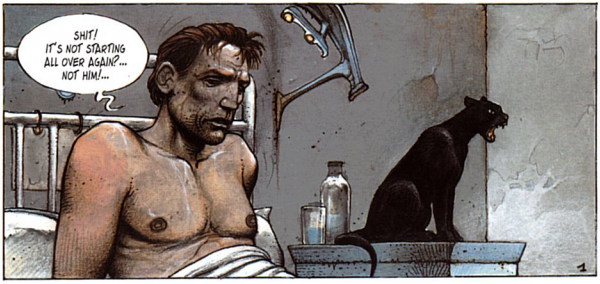
STORY ILLUSTRATION COLOR

THE NIKOPOL TRILOGY

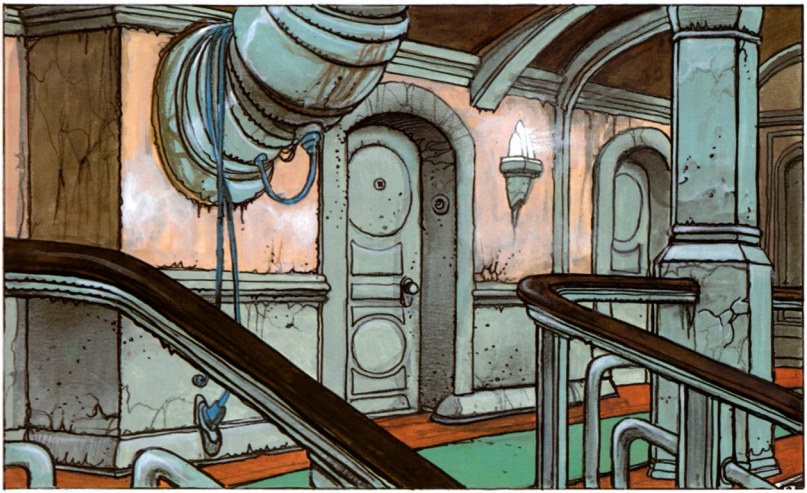
the woman trap

TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED. ALCIDE NIKOPOL IS STILL IN THE CARE OF THE HOLY SAVIOR PSYCHIATRIC CENTER IN PARIS... THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE CITY IS OF NO INTEREST. AND TODAY'S DATE IS FEBRUARY 22, 2025





MEANWHILE, SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON...



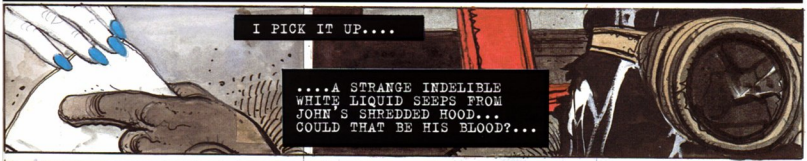
LONDON, FEBRUARY 22, 2025... SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JILL BIOSKOP.. TRANSMISSION SCRIPTWALKER ...
...FOLLOWING UP ON THE STORY... "FIGHTING BETWEEN AFRO-PAKISTANI AND ZUBEN UBIAN MINORITIES IN PARTS OF CHELSEA..."
...OF CHEL-SEA...
CHAPTER 3...
SCRIPT-WALKER
REPRISAL BY THE BENINO-TOGOLO-GHANIAN COALITION... KING'S ROAD SEIZED, NERVE CENTER OF ZUBEN-
-UBIAN...
RIIIIING...

YES?
HELLO, JILL! IT'S ME... I'VE GOT SOMETHING NEW...
...AND SERIOUS WITH EVIDENCE TO BACK IT UP.. JUST LISTEN TO THIS!
I'M LISTENING...
FIND IT FAST!
. . . "THE GUARDIAN", DATED OCTOBER 7, 1993, PAGE 16... IT'S IN SMALL PRINT AT THE BOTTOM, BUT GET A LOAD OF IT...
NEWSPAPER ITEM... "FRENCH-STYLE HOAX OR SCIENCE FICTION?"... THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER LIBERATION HAS ANNOUNCED THE UPCOMING PUBLICATION OF A SERIES OF STORIES...

...O.K., JOHN! OUT WITH IT...
...WAIT A MINUTE, JILL... I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THE CROWD GATHERING AROUND HERE...
WATCH OUT...
I'LL GET TO ANOTHER PHONE AND CALL YOU BACK...

JOHN DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET TO ANOTHER PHONE..... DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO HANG UP..... I HEARD THE EXPLOSION... AND HIS SCREAM.... THAT ALPHERATZIAN SCREAM HE LET OUT SOMETIMES WHEN LIGHT HIT HIM, OR THE FIRST TIMES WE MADE LOVE.....

....JOHN DIED ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025...
JOHN...
HE'S DEAD, MISS... DON'T STAY HERE...
...KILLED IN A ZUBEN-UBIAN ATTACK, ALONG WITH FOUR AFRO-PAKISTANIS, ONE OF WHOM WAS A KEY PLAYER IN THE CONFLICT... I DECIDE HERE AND NOW NOT TO WRITE ANY MORE ABOUT THIS SYSTEMATIC SLAUGHTER... I'D MUCH RATHER TALK ABOUT JOHN... AND I'LL DO JUST THAT... THE SCRIPT-WALKER IS STILL WORKING. JOHN STILL HAS THE PROOF IN HIS HAND.....


I PICK IT UP....
....A STRANGE INDELIBLE WHITE LIQUID SEEPS FROM JOHN'S SHREDDED HOOD... COULD THAT BE HIS BLOOD?...

Harrods
I HEAD HOME.

BACK AT THE SAVOY I COLLAPSE IN GRIEF. HOW CAN I EXPLAIN WHAT JOHN MEANT TO ME? ...YET I FEEL A REAL NEED TO WRITE... IMMEDIATELY... WITH THE SCRIPT-WALKER, SPREAD OUT OUR CRAZY STORY DEEP INTO THE PAST. EMPTY IT ALL OUT... HEAD AND HEART... AND TO FALL ASLEEP, TAKE H.L.V., JOHN'S DRUG, WHICH WILL MAKE ME FORGET HIM, ERASE HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL.....

IN THE BATHROOM, I FIND THE BOX... H.L.V.... I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT STANDS FOR. NOW I'LL NEVER KNOW. AND I DON'T GIVE A DAMN...

...FINALLY I SWALLOW ONE, THEN ANOTHER... BOTH RED... A SPLASH OF WATER AROUND MY EYES TO WIPE AWAY MY BLUE TEARS...

...THEN, NAKED, I SHUT MYSELF UP WITH THE SCRIPT-WALKER IN JOHN'S ROOM... THE DARK ROOM, NOT A TRACE OF LIGHT... I START TO WRITE... ONCE UPON A TIME, JOHN AND I...

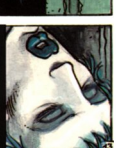
... NOT THAT... DON'T DO THAT...

...IDIOTS!!!

LONDON, FEBRUARY 24
CAMDEN TOWN...
SOMETHING WRONG, JEFF?
COULD WELL BE...
. . . IT HAPPENED JUST AS PROFESSOR STANLEY WHITELAW WAS PREPARING TO PERFORM AN AUTOPSY ON THE ALPHARATZIAN WHO HAD BEEN DECLARED CLINICALLY DEAD...
. . . IN HIS ESCAPE THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL SHOWED EXTRAORDINARY VIOLENCE, KILLING, I REPEAT, PROFESSOR STANLEY WHITELAW AND WOUNDING TWO GUARDS OF THE MEDICO-LEGAL INSTITUTE...
...ARMED SCOTLAND YARD UNITS ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING THE CRIMINAL... WALWORTH AND CAMBERWELL ARE CORDONNED OFF AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ALPHARATZIAN HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY BROADCAST ON THE OFFICIAL CHANNELS... ONCE AGAIN... HEIGHT: ABOUT SIX FOOT-TWO, HIS FACE HOODED IN BLACK...
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, IT'S HIM...
WHO? THE ALPHARATZIAN? YOU KNOW HIM?
. . . LISTEN, I'M SORRY ABOUT OUR DATE TONIGHT... I'VE GOT TO LEAVE... IT'S IMPORTANT...
I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW...

TAXI!
TAXI
SAVOY HOTEL, FAST!
... PICTURES OF THE EVENT FROM ONE OF THE CAMERAS IN THE OPERATING ROOM...
. . . UNFORTUNATELY THE RECORDING IS OF POOR QUALITY AND GIVES LITTLE INDICATION OF THE AMAZING REGENERATION OF THE ALPHARAZIAN'S BODY... VIEWED IN SLOW MOTION, IT'S AT THIS MOMENT THAT THE PROFESSOR MUST HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY A FATAL DISCHARGE OF ENERGY...

...IT'S JEFF, JEFF WYNYATT, WHO WAKES ME 48 HOURS LATER, OUT OF WHAT HE INSULTINGLY CALLS A "DEEP COMA"... ... JEFF IS A FRIEND, A BLACK-LISTED JOURNALIST, A LONELY, DESTITUTE MAN I ONCE HAD A BRIEF FLING WITH A FEW YEARS AGO (THREE TO BE EXACT), JUST BEFORE I MET JOHN...



...TO BRING ME AROUND, JEFF SPRAYS MY BREASTS WITH ICE COLD WATER...

...THEN HE DRAGS ME, STILL STONED, TO THE SAVOY RESTAURANT...OUTRAGEOUSLY EXPENSIVE AND VERY BAD, YET I MANAGE TO STUFF MYSELF...

...DURING DESSERT I ASK HIM:

ARE YOU DOING ALL THIS IN THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL GET ME TO BED AGAIN, JEFF?

IT COULD BE, JILL... BUT FOR NOW THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO FORGET EVERYTHING YOU'VE JUST BEEN THROUGH... JOHN IS DEAD!... YOU'VE GOT TO FORGET HIM . .. MAKE A BREAK, CLEAR OUT OF THIS LONDON HELL-HOLE... SO LISTEN: I'VE GOT A PLAN FOR YOU...

. . A PLAN THAT'S BETTER THAN ALL THE GARBAGE YOU'VE BEEN SWALLOWING...

...WHAT JEFF SUGGESTS IS THAT I LEAVE LONDON... A PRETTY RARE THING THESE DAYS, RESERVED FOR THE KING'S CHOSEN FEW OF WHOM JEFF IS NOT ONE AND ME EVEN LESS SO...

...“WHEN, HOW, GOING WHERE?” I ASK, A BIT SLOSHED...

...“TOMORROW MORNING, BY AIR-TAXI, TO BERLIN,” HE ANSWERS...

... A FRIEND OF MINE, NICK, WILL TAKE YOU THERE... I'VE GOT MONEY FOR YOU AND AN ORDER FOR PERMANENT ASSIGNMENT FROM THE N.I.S... IT'S PHONY, BUT IT'LL GET YOU OUT OF LONDON... ONCE YOU'RE IN BERLIN, YOU'LL STAY AT THE MAUER PALAST... IT'S THE ONLY PRIVATE HOTEL IN TOWN... VERY BEAUTIFUL AND VERY EXPENSIVE... YOU'LL LOVE IT...

... I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO COVER THE BERLIN NEWS IN GENERAL BUT ESPECIALLY THE EUROPA I'S RETURN TO EARTH...

...“EUROPA I”, THE FIRST EUROPEAN INTERPLANETARY SPACE MISSION, LAUNCHED IN 1999 (THE YEAR I WAS BORN)... IT SEEMS THEY'RE EXPECTING IT BACK IN A FEW DAYS AT THE BERLIN-TEGEL/TREPTOW ASTROPORT...

...AS FOR ME, I'LL BE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SELL YOUR STORIES HERE... AND IN A WHILE, WHO KNOWS, MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO JOIN YOU IN BERLIN...

...JEFF NEVER SHOULD HAVE UTTERED THAT LAST SENTENCE...

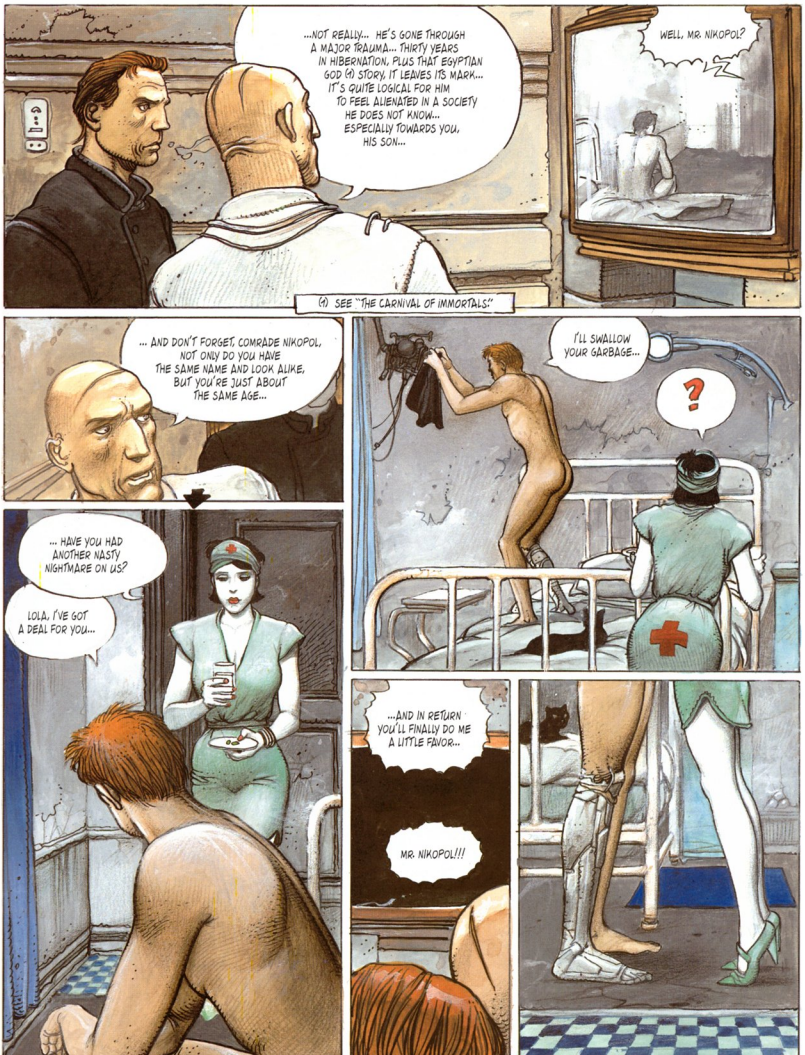
...JUST AS HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME TO MY ROOM THAT NIGHT...
IT'S CRAZY HOW MUCH BLOOD HE LOSES ONCE I'VE STABBED HIM THROUGH THE HEART WITH THE SCRIPT-WALKER'S DETACHABLE ANTENNA... . . FUNNY THING IS IT'S HARDER TO GET ALL THE BLOOD OFF MY HANDS AND BODY THAN IT IS GETTING RID OF HIS BODY...
UK POLICE
...I DECIDE TO GO RIGHT TO SLEEP AND WIPE IT ALL OUT (RED H.L.V. PILL)...
BILAL
46

THAT NIGHT, IN PARIS...
FUCKING FLYING SHIT...

HE'S COMING, I CAN FEEL IT...

... THESE NIGHTMARES APPEAR TO BE REAL, COMRADE NIKOPOL... BUT ALL THE OTHER SYMPTOMS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN FAKED, TO SAY THE LEAST. FOR A LONG TIME NOW... IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR FATHER REFUSES TO ADMIT THAT HE'S RECOVERED HIS SANITY...

THAT'S RIDICULOUS...


...NOT REALLY... HE'S GONE THROUGH A MAJOR TRAUMA... THIRTY YEARS IN HIBERNATION, PLUS THAT EGYPTIAN GOD (4) STORY, IT LEAVES ITS MARK... IT'S QUITE LOGICAL FOR HIM TO FEEL ALIENATED IN A SOCIETY HE DOES NOT KNOW... ESPECIALLY TOWARDS YOU, HIS SON...
WELL, MR. NIKOPOL?
(4) SEE "THE CARNIVAL OF IMMORTALS."
... AND DON'T FORGET, COMRADE NIKOPOL, NOT ONLY DO YOU HAVE THE SAME NAME AND LOOK ALIKE, BUT YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE SAME AGE...
I'LL SWALLOW YOUR GARBAGE...
?
... HAVE YOU HAD ANOTHER NASTY NIGHTMARE ON US?
LOLA, I'VE GOT A DEAL FOR YOU...
...AND IN RETURN YOU'LL FINALLY DO ME A LITTLE FAVOR...
MR. NIKOPOL!!!

THE NEXT DAY, NICK, THE FRIEND JEFF TOLD ME ABOUT, IS WAITING FOR ME IN THE LOBBY.
...HE'S VERY NERVOUS... BECAUSE OF THE COPS...
SAVOY HOTEL
THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE AND YOU'RE LATE...
I'M SORRY...
SAVOY
GET IN!
ARE THEY LOOKING FOR SOMEONE?
TAXI

...THE GUY ISN'T VERY TALKATIVE... WHICH IS JUST AS WELL... THE EFFECTS OF H.L.V. ON ME AREN'T EXACTLY FLATTERING... ESPECIALLY PHYSICALLY... I HOPE I WON'T THROW UP DURING THE TRIP...

...BUT FROM A MEMORY STANDPOINT, IT'S BLOODY EFFECTIVE ...THE CRIME COMMITTED THAT NIGHT FADES QUICKLY, COLDLY, IN MY HEAD... JEFF GETS PUT THROUGH THE BUFFING PROCESS AND COMES OUT ERASED... JUST LIKE JOHN...

...FUNNY, THE FACT THAT AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE (JOHN IN PARTICULAR) HAS BEEN CUT OUT LEAVES ME TOTALLY NUMB... MAYBE THIS STRANGE FEELING THAT I'M BEING SUCKED FORWARD HAS FILLED UP THE VOID... SUCKED INTO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE... BERLIN...

I DON'T ANSWER OR HARDLY... THE FACT THAT I'M LEAVING LONDON KNOWING I'LL NEVER BE BACK DOESN'T AFFECT ME ONE LITTLE BIT... THE CITY'S ALREADY FAR BEHIND... IN RETROSPECT IT SEEMS THAT I HARDLY NOTICED THE COLOR OF THE THAMES AS WE FLEW OVER THE RIVER AT TOWER BRIDGE...

...I QUICKLY SLIP ON A GLOVE TO MAKE IT GO AWAY ...IN MY POCKET I STUMBLE ACROSS THE PRESS CLIPPING JOHN HAD BEEN READING TO ME BEFORE HE DIED... WHAT I DISCOVERED IS THE CRUX OF EVERYTHING...

PRESSE

CANULAR À LA FRANÇAISE OU SCIENCE-FICTION ?

Le quotidien Français "Libération" annonce la prochaine publication d'une série d'articles dont la particularité serait de provenir du futur (de l'année 2025). Un de ces articles traiterait notamment de la situation de Londres.
Les mêmes initiales, J.B., se trouveraient au bas de tous ces papiers. Canular ou pas, l'affaire est à suivre.

...I CLOSE MY EYES, NOTHING BOTHERS ME...

...THE PLANE IS ALREADY SOMEWHERE OVER THE CHANNEL... ABOUT TO FLY INTO A HUGE CLOUD MASS (RED)...I THINK OF WHAT MY READERS FROM 1993 MIGHT LOOK LIKE... HEY, WHY 1993 ANYWAY?... AND WHY A FRENCH NEWSPAPER? ...THE PROGRAMMING CHIP MUST HAVE GONE OFF ITS ROCKER... ANYWAY I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE DATE... THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT IT WORKS...

TAXI

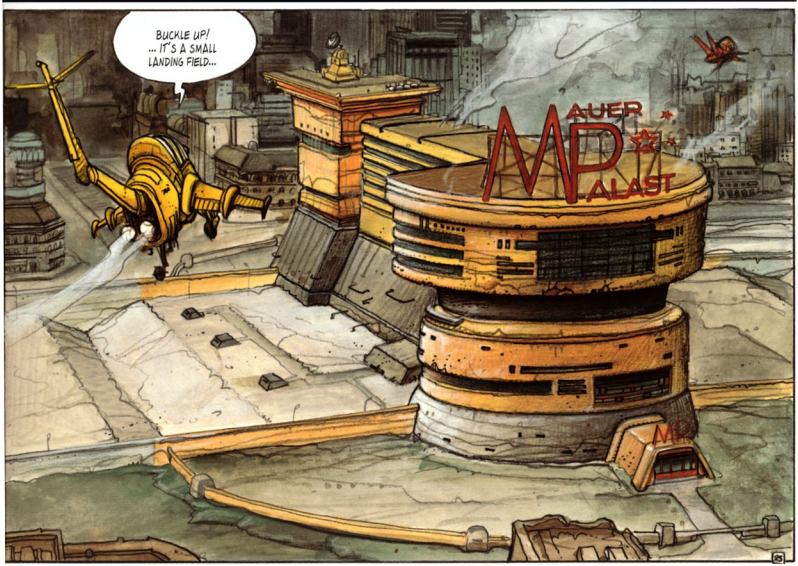
...BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP, I REALIZE THAT THANKS TO THIS SCRIPT-WALKER I'M DOING THE MOST EXCITING JOURNALISM IN THE WORLD.

73

* **PRESS FRENCH-STYLE HOAX OR SCIENCE FICTION?** The French newspaper "Liberation" has announced the upcoming publication of stories... which claim to have come from the future (from 2025). One of the stories deals especially with the situation in London. The same initials, J.B., are signed at the end of all these papers. Hoax or not, it's a story that deserves to be followed up.

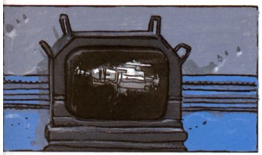
. . . MEANWHILE... FAR AWAY... NEAR MARS...
YOU'RE SURE HE WAS THERE?
ABSOLUTELY SURE!
BAD NEWS... HORUS HAS DISAPPEARED... FOR AT LEAST A FRACTION OF ETERNITY... PROBABLY DURING A COLLISION WITH A FIELD OF METEORITES...
SO, ARE WE GOING BACK?
YES, ANUBAST, WE'RE TURNING BACK TO EARTH!
NEAT!

...AT THE END OF THE GREAT RED CLOUD TUNNEL AND AFTER SEVEN HOURS IN FLIGHT,THE CITY OF BERLIN FINALLY APPEARS BELOW, THE ONLY AUTONOMOUS ENCLAVE IN THE HEART OF THE CZECHOSOVIET EMPIRE...



WELCOME TO THE MAUER PALAST, MADAME!
...IT'S SO COLD HERE...
MP
...SAYING GOODBYE TO NICK, I FEEL REALLY UNEASY... THE WAY HE SHAKES MY HAND... AND HIS ICY STARE FOLLOWS ME OUT OF SIGHT... A PERVERSE, HORRIBLY PENETRATING STARE... AIMED STRAIGHT AT THE SMALL OF MY BACK...

I SHUT MYSELF IN MY ROOM... I TAKE A SHOWER AND ORDER SOME FOOD...

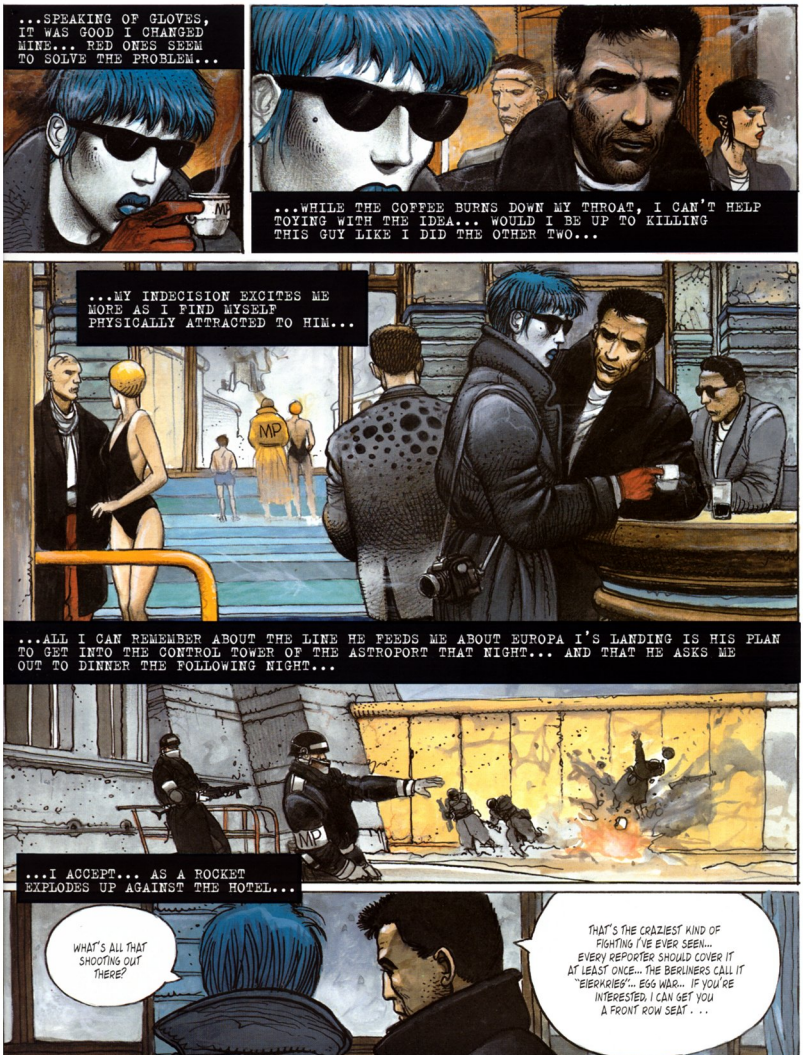


IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SOMETHING VERY SERIOUS IS ABOUT TO TARNISH THE RETURN OF EUROPA I TO EARTH... THE BERLIN ASTROPORT AUTHORITIES REFUSE FOR THE MOMENT TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT BUT DRACONIAN SECURITY MEASURES ARE NOW IN PLACE... THE LANDING, I REPEAT, IS SCHEDULED IN LESS THAN 48 HOURS...

...IT'S NIGHT IN BERLIN... I'M READING BACK EVERYTHING I TYPED INTO THE SCRIPT-WALKER IN THE ORDER I WROTE IT... "FIGHTING AMONG THE MINORITIES IN LONDON," FIRST... KIND OF A DRAG... THEN THE STUFF ON JOHN... PRETTY WEIRD... ESPECIALLY IN HINDSIGHT... THE SEX MAKES ME SMILE... AS FOR THE REST, MY FEELINGS AND CONFESSING MY CRIME, I DON'T GIVE THIS A THOUGHT. . . TOMORROW, I'LL START WITH A SERIOUS REPORT ON THE MAUER PALAST AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD...

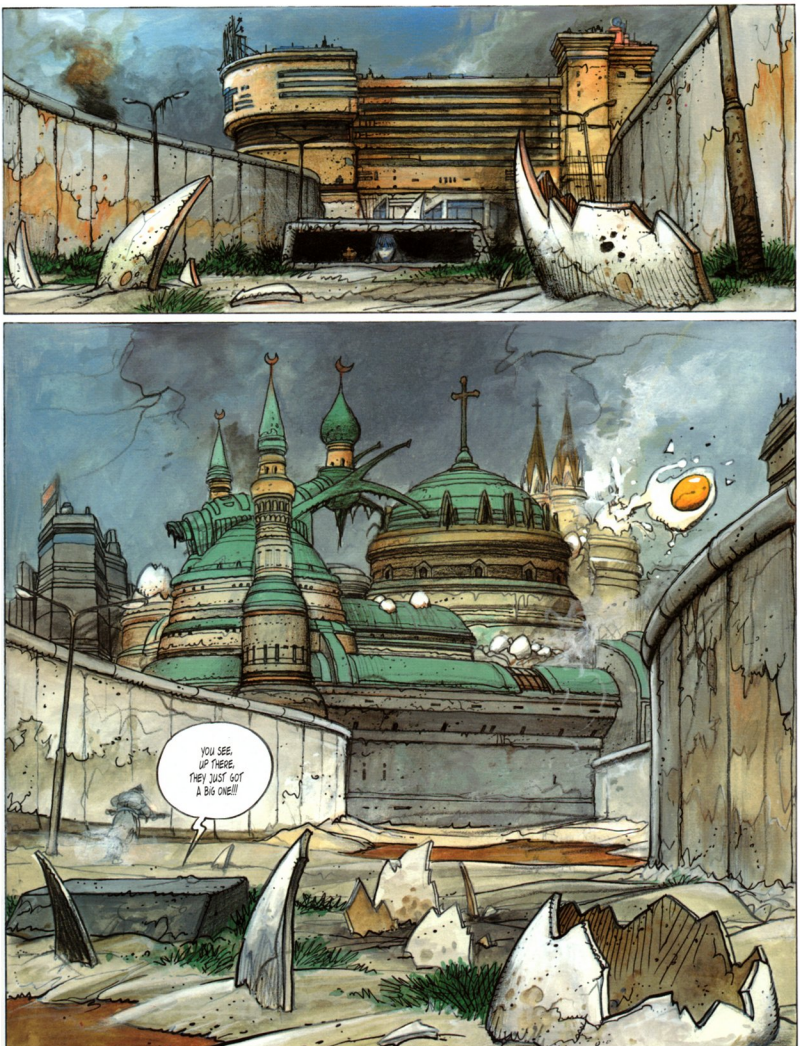
...AND IT'S JUST AS WELL... THAT BASTARD NICK, SLIMY, DIRTY SNAKE THAT HE IS, MANAGES TO CRAWL UNDER MY SHEETS IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...
...UP AGAINST MY SKIN...
THE CREEP!
...I WIPE OFF HIS BLOOD (THE COLOR OF THE THAMES) AND DRAG HIS BODY OVER TO THE WINDOW...
...I SHOVE IT OUT...
...NOT A TRACE ANYWHERE...
...NOT EVEN IN MY HEAD...

...NEXT MORNING, A RUDE AWAKENING... MORTAR AND MACHINE GUN FIRE...
MP
...MOVING IN CLOSE TO THE HOTEL...
MP
CAN I BUY YOU A COFFEE?
...THE ONE TRYING TO PICK ME UP SAYS HIS NAME IS IVAN VABEK, A YUGOSLOVAKIAN REPORTER...
... JILL BIOSKOP? BIOSKOP MEANS "MOVIE" IN MY LANGUAGE... I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT FITS YOU LIKE A GLOVE...
"OH?!" I LET OUT ...

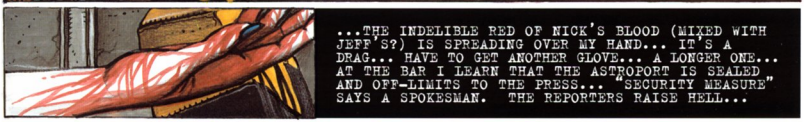

...SPEAKING OF GLOVES, IT WAS GOOD I CHANGED MINE... RED ONES SEEM TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM...
...WHILE THE COFFEE BURNS DOWN MY THROAT, I CAN'T HELP TOYING WITH THE IDEA... WOULD I BE UP TO KILLING THIS GUY LIKE I DID THE OTHER TWO...
...MY INDECISION EXCITES ME MORE AS I FIND MYSELF PHYSICALLY ATTRACTED TO HIM...
MP
...ALL I CAN REMEMBER ABOUT THE LINE HE FEEDS ME ABOUT EUROPA I'S LANDING IS HIS PLAN TO GET INTO THE CONTROL TOWER OF THE ASTROPORT THAT NIGHT... AND THAT HE ASKS ME OUT TO DINNER THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...
...I ACCEPT... AS A ROCKET EXPLODES UP AGAINST THE HOTEL...
WHAT'S ALL THAT SHOOTING OUT THERE?
THAT'S THE CRAZIEST KIND OF FIGHTING I'VE EVER SEEN... EVERY REPORTER SHOULD COVER IT AT LEAST ONCE... THE BERLINERS CALL IT "EIERKRIEG"... EGG WAR... IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I CAN GET YOU A FRONT ROW SEAT . . .

...OF COURSE I'M INTERESTED... I LEAVE THE YUGO AND HOTEL AT ONCE...
...DO YOU HAVE A PASS?
...PRESS CARD...
WATCH OUT... THE ISLAMO-CHRISTIANS ARE GOING HAYWIRE...
MP
...FURTHER ON, I MEET MY "LEAD"... NAMED IBRAHIM... AGE 14...
"HOW MUCH", I ASK...
REAL EXPENSIVE!

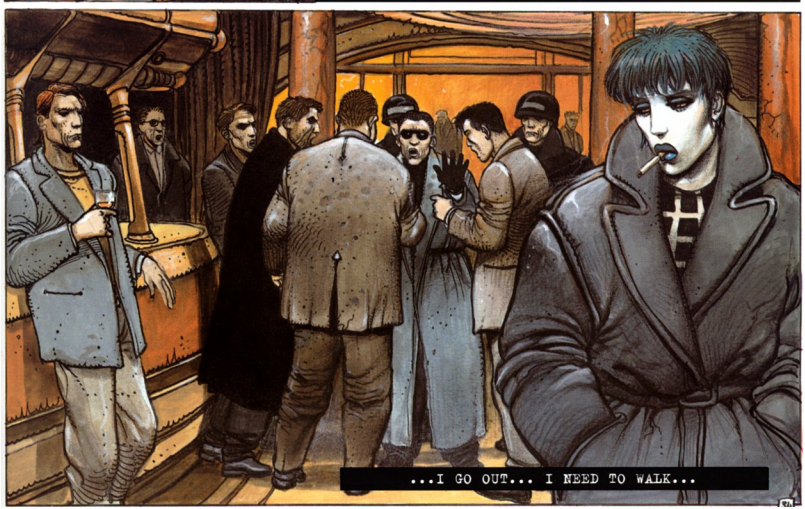
...BUT FOR YOU I'LL LOWER MY PRICE... I LIKE THAT BLUE HAIR AND WHITE SKIN OF YOURS...
ГДЕ?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS "EIERKRIEG"?
NOTHING... THAT'S WHY I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU...
THEN TAKE A LOOK...


YOU SEE, UP THERE, THEY JUST GOT A BIG ONE!!!

...THAT EVENING, BACK IN MY ROOM I DO A PIECE ON THE "EIERKRIEG". IT IS IN FACT THE CRAZIEST, MOST GROTESQUE KIND OF FIGHTING I'VE EVER SEEN... I THINK OF IBRAHIM... HE'S SCARY, BUT I WON'T FORGET HIM...

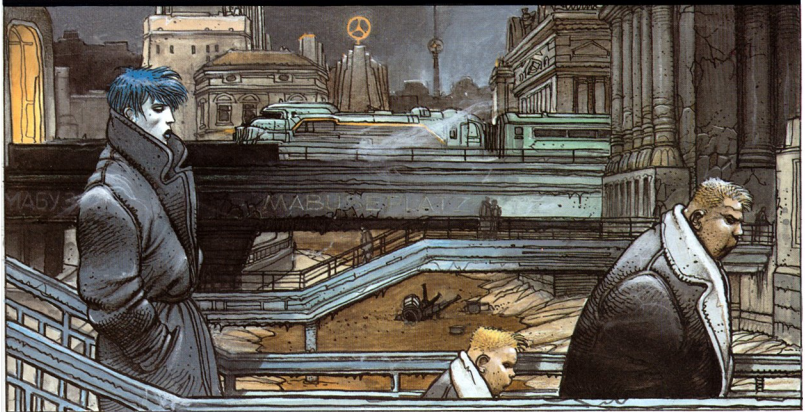


...THE INDELIBLE RED OF NICK'S BLOOD (MIXED WITH JEFF'S?) IS SPREADING OVER MY HAND... IT'S A DRAG... HAVE TO GET ANOTHER GLOVE... A LONGER ONE... AT THE BAR I LEARN THAT THE ASTROPORT IS SEALED AND OFF-LIMITS TO THE PRESS... "SECURITY MEASURE" SAYS A SPOKESMAN. THE REPORTERS RAISE HELL...



...I GO OUT... I NEED TO WALK...

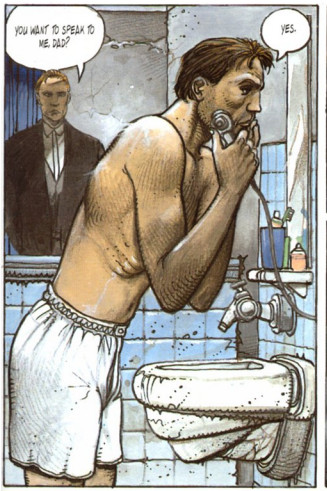
...ANYHOW, STORIES ABOUT ROCKETS HAVE ALWAYS BORED ME STIFF... AND AS FAR AS EUROPA I GOES, I COULD GIVE A SHIT...



LATER THAT NIGHT, AN EAR SPLITTING ROAR, ALMOST UNBEARABLE, RIPS THROUGH BERLIN'S NIGHT SKY AND GIVES ME A CHANCE TO SCREAM MY LUNGS OUT FOR A FEW SECONDS... FROM DEEP INSIDE ME AND LEAVING ME FEELING REALLY GOOD AFTERWARDS...

...THE ROAR DIES DOWN, THEN SILENCE... EUROPA I HAS JUST LANDED AT TEGEL/TREPTOW... I THINK OF IVAN VABEK WHO MUST HAVE MADE IT INSIDE... I TELL MYSELF IF HE COMES OUT WITH A SCOOP, I'LL KNOW HOW TO MAKE HIM TALK...

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? ...ALL DEAD... SHE'S THE ONLY SURVIVOR... CAN YOU HEAR ME?



HORUS, THE PARANOID GOD, IS BACK ON EARTH... MEETING HIM IS GOING TO BE COMPLETELY UNAVOIDABLE... LEAVING TWO POSSIBILITIES... EITHER HE COMES TO ME OR I GO TO HIM...
?

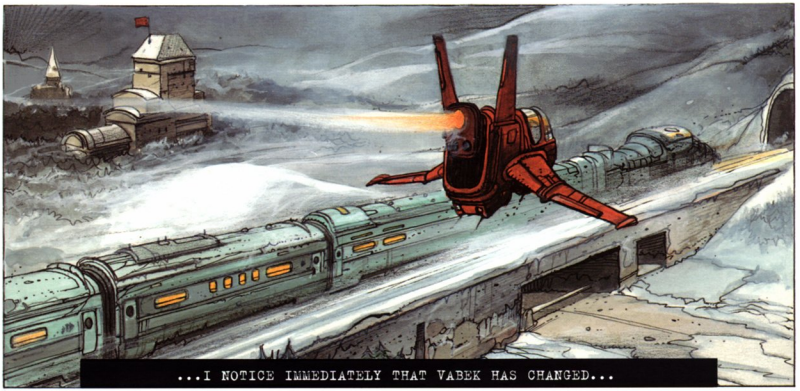
...I CHOOSE TO GO TO HIM FOR TWO REASONS ... FIRST OF ALL HE'S SLAUGHTERING EVERYONE IN SIGHT AND IT'S TIME HE'S STOPPED... SECOND, WHATEVER I DO...

...I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO THIS ERA AND ITS WAY OF LIFE... GOING BACK TO HORUS MEANS GETTIN BACK ON THE TRACK OF THE ABSURD AND IRRATIONAL WHICH BROUGHT ME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE. ON THAT MISERABLE DAY IN 1998 (a)... JUST AS WELL TO ACCEPT MY SOUL'S SICKNESS AND MY TEMPORAL DISORDER... AND GET ON WITH IT
ACTUALLY I FIND IT QUITE AMUSING.

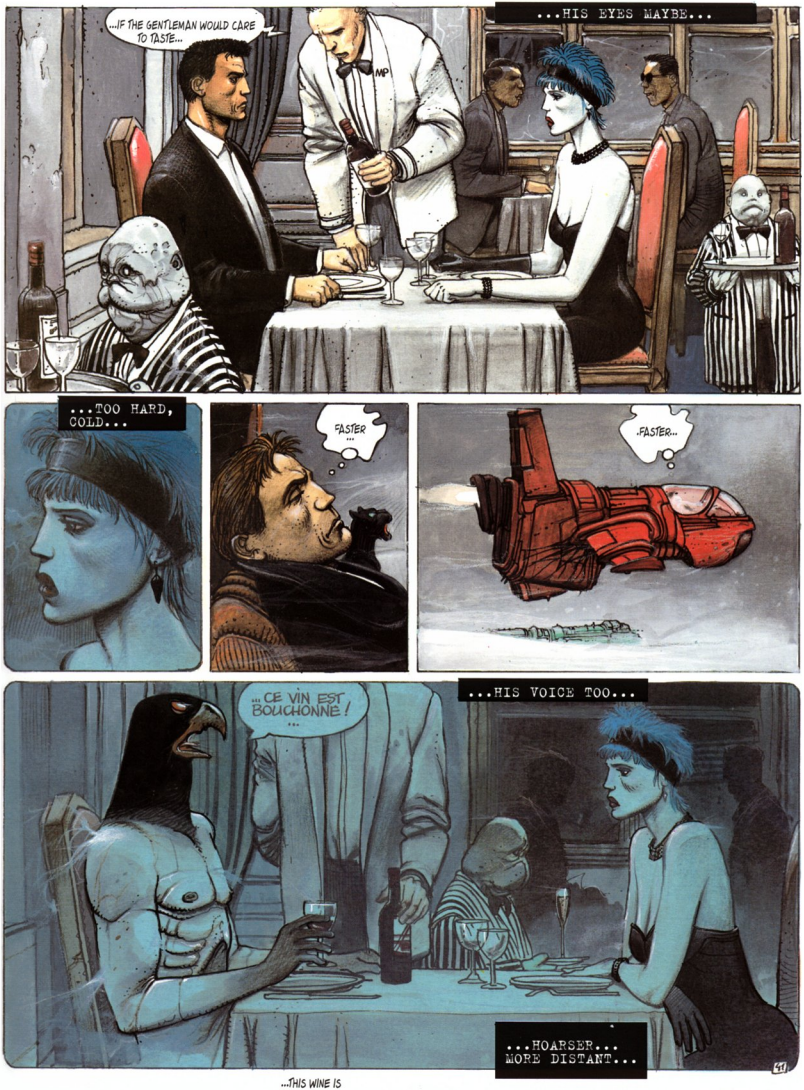
(a) SEE "THE CARNIVAL OF IMMORTALS".

...I HARDLY EVER DO MY HAIR OR PUT ON REAL LIPSTICK... BUT TONIGHT I WANT TO... I'M ALSO STARVING...

THERE...
...IT'S TIME TO PUT YOU TO THE TEST, VABEK. ALTHOUGH YOU SEEM ESPECIALLY NERVOUS TO ME... I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BEAR MY PRESENCE INSIDE YOUR BODY AND THE INEVITABLE CEREBRAL PRESSURE THAT COMES WITH IT...

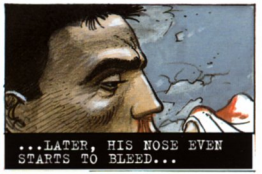

...I NOTICE IMMEDIATELY THAT VABEK HAS CHANGED...

...BUT I CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON HOW...



...THIS WINE IS CORKED...

...THE FOOD IS AWFUL THAT NIGHT. AND WE HARDLY SPEAK... HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT EUROPA I. DEAD END... AFTER THE FIRST COURSE HE STARTS TO SHAKE... HE LEAVES THE TABLE THREE TIMES, KNOCKS OVER HIS GLASS TWICE, AND SMASHES HIS PLATE ONCE WHEN HE CUT HIS MEAT TOO HARD...

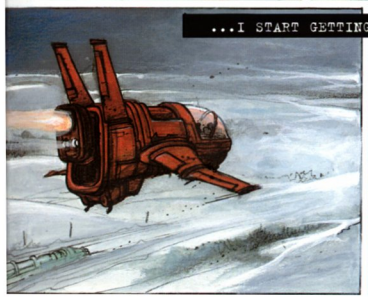


...LATER, HIS NOSE EVEN STARTS TO BLEED...

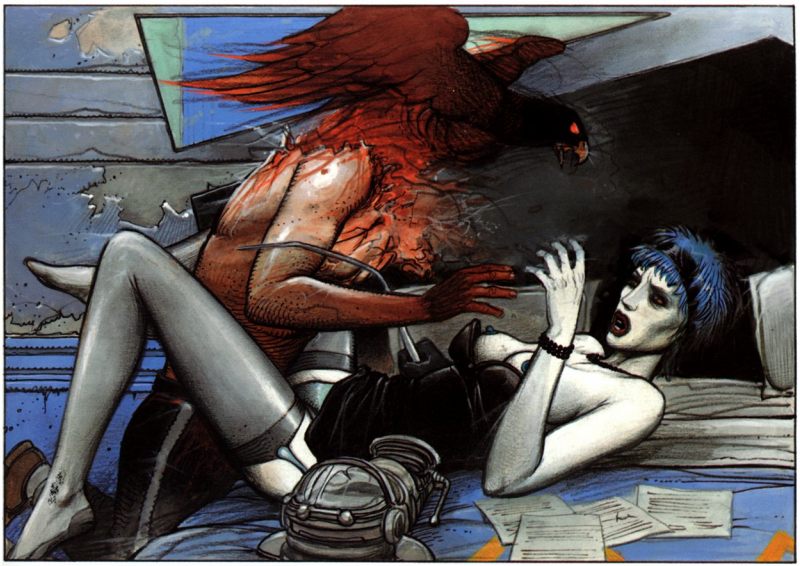
...HE LOSES HIS BALANCE IN MY ROOM WHILE OPENING THE CHAMPAGNE...

...AND THEN, I REALIZE, HIS MIND...

...I START GETTING SCARED...

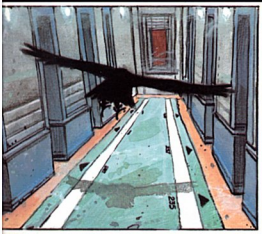


...VERY SCARED...

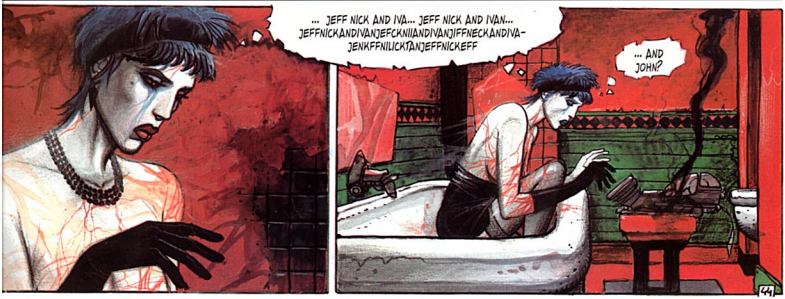


...WHAT HAPPENS THAT NIGHT IS COMPLETELY HORRIFYING... I NEED TO WRITE ABOUT IT... FOR MY READERS IN 1993... I RUN TO LOCK MYSELF INTO THE BATHROOM WITH THE SCRIPT-WALKER, TO GET AWAY FROM THE WAVES OF THE THAMES STAINING MY BED... I START TO WRITE... FIRST THE HEADLINE: "HORROR AT THE MAUER PALAST"...

...THE THREE MEN I HAVE KILLED ARE NAMED JEFF, NICK AND IVAN. THESE THREE MEN...



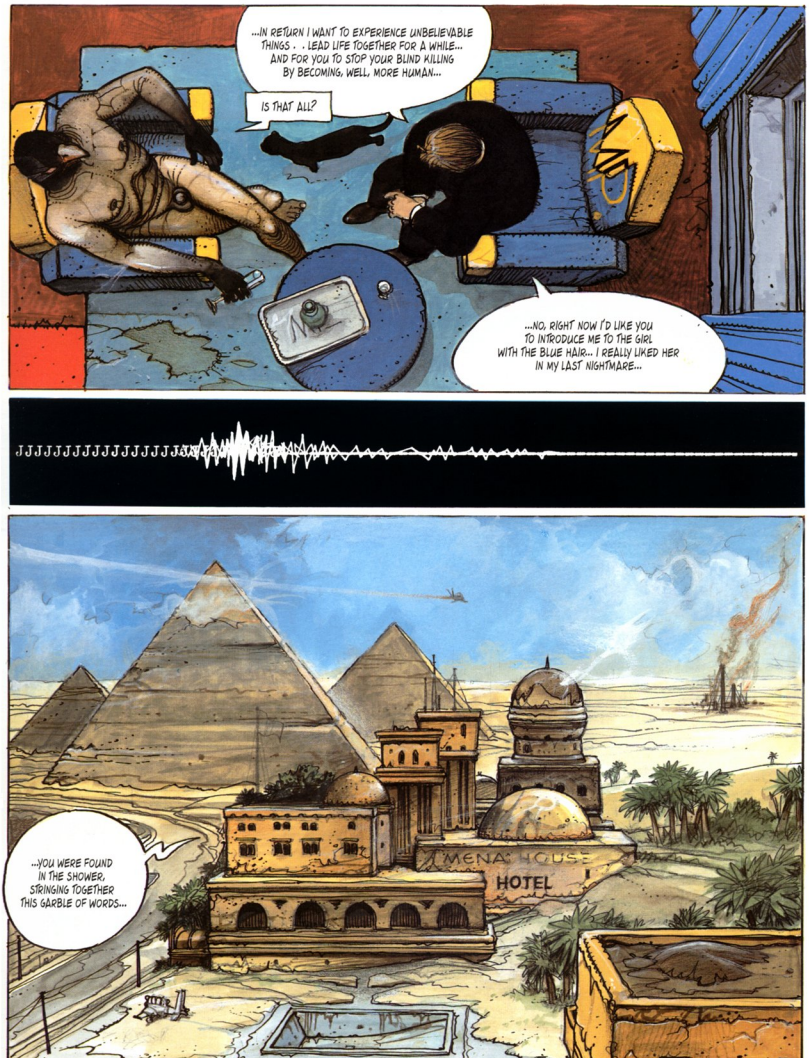
THESE THREE MEN ARE NAMED JEFF NICK AND IVAN AND THEIR NAMES ARE JEFF NICK AND IVAN THE FIR ST JEFF THE SECON NICK THE LAST IVAN THEY'RE NICK JEFF AND IVAN JECK NIFF AND IVAN... JEN NIVE AND IVAF JIVE NECK AN IFFAN JEFF NICK N IV

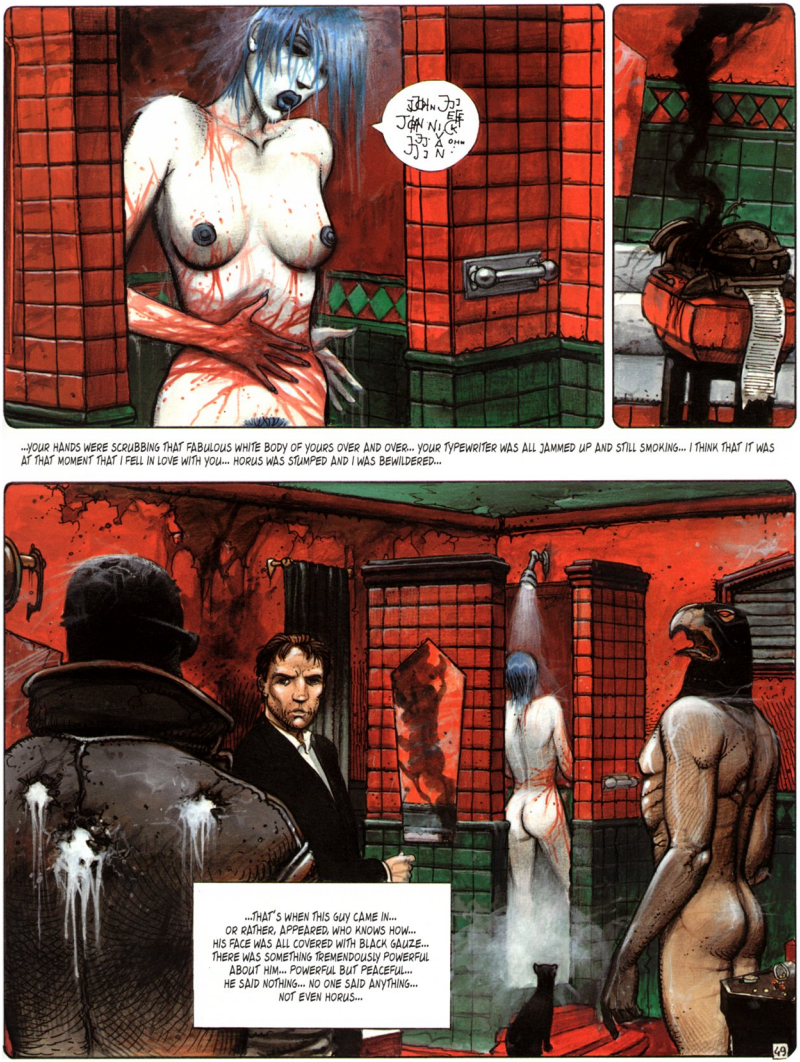

... JEFF NICK AND IVA... JEFF NICK AND IVAN... JEFFNICKANDIVAN JEFCKNIIANDIVAN JIFFNECKANDIVA- JENAFFNILICKIAN JEFFNICKEFF
... AND JOHN?

...HERE, MR. NIKOPOL... ROOM 412 . . .
...IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D PREFER 232...
MP
THANK YOU . .. PUT IT OVER THERE...
MP
CALM DOWN, GOGOL. CALM DOWN...
HORUS!!?
IT'S NIKOPOL! I KNOW YOU'RE HERE!...
I THINK WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT...
45

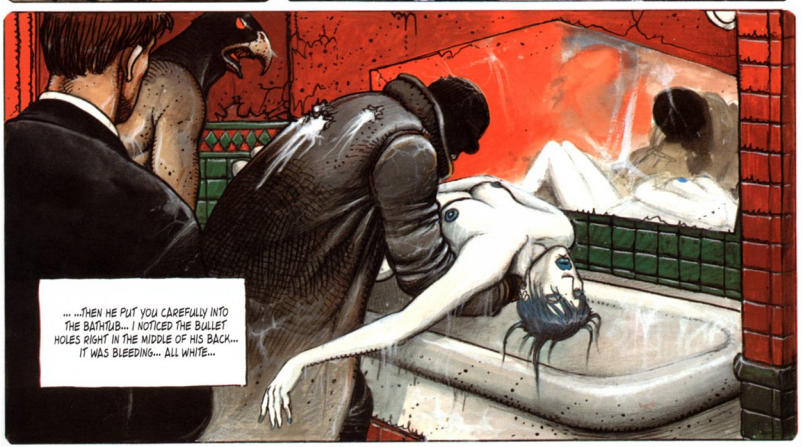
. . . HNJOHNJOHNJOHNOHHNJHHONNJOOHNJJJJJJJJJJJJJJOJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJ
BERLIN 1
...AND IT'S THANKS TO THIS ANIMAL WHICH FUNCTIONS AS A KIND OF TELEPATHIC NETWORK THAT I WAS ABLE TO FOLLOW YOUR RETURN TO EARTH...
. .. I DON'T LIKE CATS... THEY REMIND ME OF BASTET... MY PAST...
EXACTLY!... THE PAST!... LET'S CROSS IT OUT! LET'S FORGET IT!!!
POLICE!!!... FOLLOW US...

...YOU KNOW, HORUS, I'VE GIVEN A LOT OF THOUGHT TO OUR SITUATION, AND WHAT OUR RELATIONSHIP COULD BE...
I'M LISTENING...
IT'S SIMPLE... WE'RE BOTH TURNING INTO TOTAL LOSERS... EACH IN HIS OWN WAY... YOU ON SOME DIVINE LEVEL I CAN'T UNDERSTAND AND WHICH IS DRIVING YOU CRAZY, AND ME IN A COMMUNITY OF MEN THAT YOU DESPISE AND THAT I FEEL COMPLETELY OUT OF TOUCH WITH...
DER AMERI
FREUND
BRUNO GANZ
WIM WE
...SO WHAT I'M PROPOSING IS A COLLABORATION, NO MORE, NO LESS... ON A TRIAL BASIS... WITH A WELL-DEFINED SET OF RULES... A MORAL CONTRACT, IF YOU WILL... WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS BETTER IF WE COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER... I'M READY TO GIVE YOU A HOME IN MY BODY JUST LIKE BEFORE... YOU KNOW WITH ME THERE WON'T BE ANY REJECTION SYNDROME...
AND WHAT DO YOU WANT IN RETURN?...

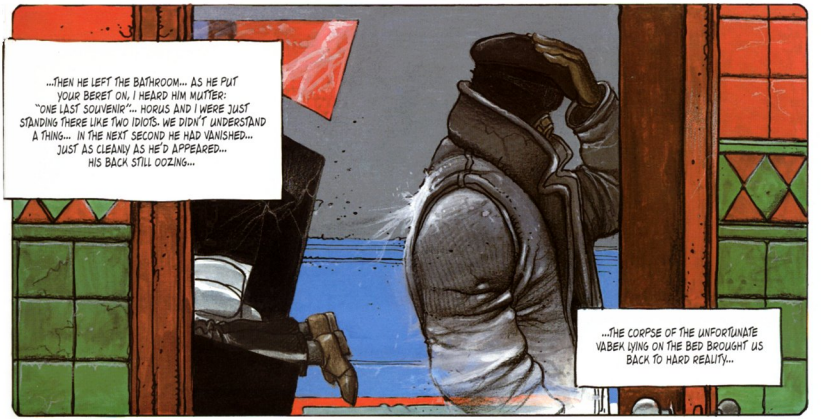

...IN RETURN I WANT TO EXPERIENCE UNBELIEVABLE THINGS . . LEAD LIFE TOGETHER FOR A WHILE... AND FOR YOU TO STOP YOUR BLIND KILLING BY BECOMING, WELL, MORE HUMAN...
IS THAT ALL?
...NO, RIGHT NOW I'D LIKE YOU TO INTRODUCE ME TO THE GIRL WITH THE BLUE HAIR... I REALLY LIKED HER IN MY LAST NIGHTMARE...
...YOU WERE FOUND IN THE SHOWER, STRINGING TOGETHER THIS GARBLE OF WORDS...
MENA HOUSE
HOTEL


...YOUR HANDS WERE SCRUBBING THAT FABULOUS WHITE BODY OF YOURS OVER AND OVER... YOUR TYPEWRITER WAS ALL JAMMED UP AND STILL SMOKING... I THINK THAT IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THAT I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU... HORUS WAS STUMPED AND I WAS BEWILDERED...
...THAT'S WHEN THIS GUY CAME IN... OR RATHER, APPEARED, WHO KNOWS HOW... HIS FACE WAS ALL COVERED WITH BLACK GAUZE... THERE WAS SOMETHING TREMENDOUSLY POWERFUL ABOUT HIM... POWERFUL BUT PEACEFUL... HE SAID NOTHING... NO ONE SAID ANYTHING... NOT EVEN HORUS...
48

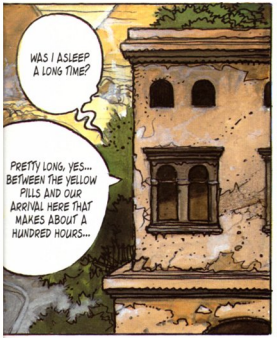
...HE WENT RIGHT TO THE PILLS AND BEGAN COUNTING THEM... NINE YELLOW ONES AND TWO REDS... HE TOOK FOUR OF THEM (INCLUDING TWO RED ONES)... JUST MUTTERING IN A HOLLOW, ECHOING VOICE:


... ...THEN HE PUT YOU CAREFULLY INTO THE BATHTUB... I NOTICED THE BULLET HOLES RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS BACK... IT WAS BLEEDING... ALL WHITE...

...AFTER KISSING YOU THROUGH THAT WEIRD MASK OF HIS, HE TOOK TWO OF THOSE PILLS HIMSELF (ONE OF EACH COLOR), AND SAID: "THE TWO LEFT OVER ARE HERS... SHE MIGHT NEED THEM SOME DAY... FOR ANOTHER STORY."

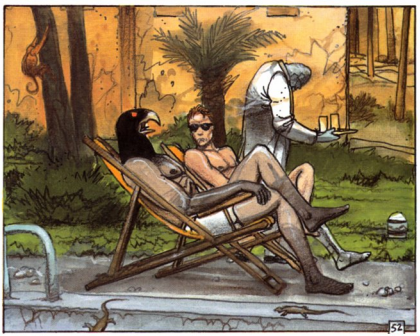

...THEN HE LEFT THE BATHROOM... AS HE PUT YOUR BERET ON, I HEARD HIM MUTTER: "ONE LAST SOUVENIR"... HORUS AND I WERE JUST STANDING THERE LIKE TWO IDIOTS. WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A THING... IN THE NEXT SECOND HE HAD VANISHED... JUST AS CLEANLY AS HE'D APPEARED... HIS BACK STILL OOZING...
...THE CORPSE OF THE UNFORTUNATE VABEK LYING ON THE BED BROUGHT US BACK TO HARD REALITY...

THEN THINGS STARTED HAPPENING AT A HELLISH PACE, BECAUSE WE HAD TO GET AWAY SOONER THAN WE'D PLANNED DUE TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE PYRAMID OVER BERLIN... YOU WERE IN A DEEP SLEEP WHEN WE LOADED YOUR BODY INTO AN AIRTAXI WE'D HAD A HARD TIME GETTING AND THEN SPLIT... DUE SOUTH... HORUS WASN'T REALLY SURPRISED TO SEE HIS OWN PEOPLE HOT ON HIS TRAIL AND PILOTED LIKE A GOD... GOGOL HAD GOTTEN BACK HIS GREEN AND WHITE STRIPES AND WAS OVERJOYED TO LEAVE EUROPE WHERE THAT EX-TERRORIST HEAD OF HIS STILL HAD A PRICE ON IT... AND ME, ALCIDE NIKOPOL SENIOR (I'LL EXPLAIN THAT SOMEDAY...), I FOUND THE ADVENTURE QUITE THRILLING, AS I PATIENTLY WAITED FOR YOU TO WAKE...



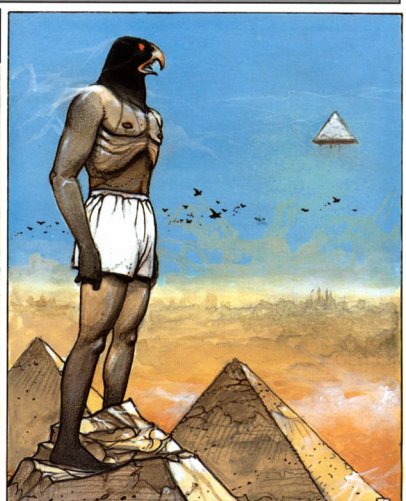
The day after I woke up –
March 6, 2025–

Cairo – I'm starting a diary...
...Because I need to write even more now...
Nikopol and Horus are beside a swimming pool with no water... it's hot... I just read a copy of what I wrote on the Script-Walker and felt totally detached... Dead people, "Thames colored" blood (!!!?)...
Was I out of my mind?... Anyway, there isn't a trace of anything on my hands or body, nothing...
I pick up the phone...

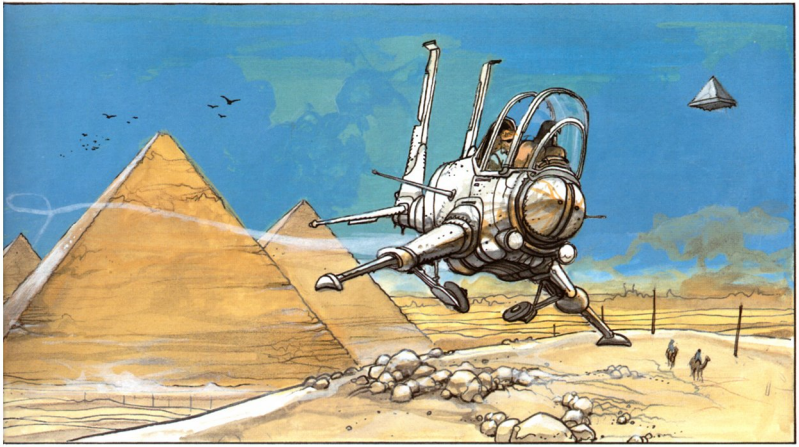


On that same March 6, 2025, I burn those sad words, proof of twelve days of what seemed like a never-ending, bloody nightmare... Except for Ivan Vabek, killed by Horus (to save me, says he), the others (Jeff and Nick) were dead only in my own mind... And then there's John, much more painful... As I burn the story of our affair, I can feel my stomach sinking, contracting into an open pit, like a gaping wound . . But the H.L.V. has cut most of this out of my memory, so I'll probably never realize the full extent of the disastrous misunderstanding over his death... May he live happily ever after without me (he must be immortal), just as I hope to without him...

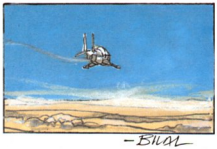
March 7, 2025 – I've got the feeling I'm starting everything at square one... It's very hot and there's still no water in the pool...



Our sudden departure, due to the arrival of the flying pyramid over Cairo, was like a game I didn't mind playing at all... That way I didn't have time to ask myself too many questions about how my strange relationship with the Nikopol/Horus pair came about, and even now I don't really know much about it.



As far as my interest in a new love affair is concerned, it would almost scare me, if somewhere in the bottom of one of my pockets there weren't those two little pills, especially the yellow one with its spectacular mind-scouring effect... Already I'm almost happy, it's high noon and we're heading due south, the sun's high, the sand wide open... Farther away still from the cold cities with their wounds and blue tears...



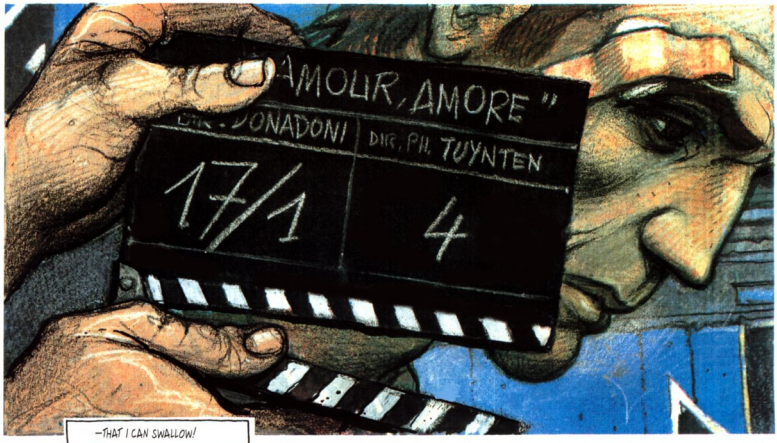
THE NIKOPOL TRILOGY

equator cold

"Qbpeb ? I pqn't give a cbad arqut qbpeb. I'm gqing tq jive, jqve, anp pie in cqmdjete anp utteb chaqz !"

A. Nikopol (Equator City 2034)

—YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE HIS SON?! HIS TWIN BROTHER MAYBE, BUT NOT HIS SON!...
—OKAY. I WON'T PUSH IT. YOU'RE RIGHT, WE'RE THE SAME AGE, WE'RE TWINS...



—THAT I CAN SWALLOW!

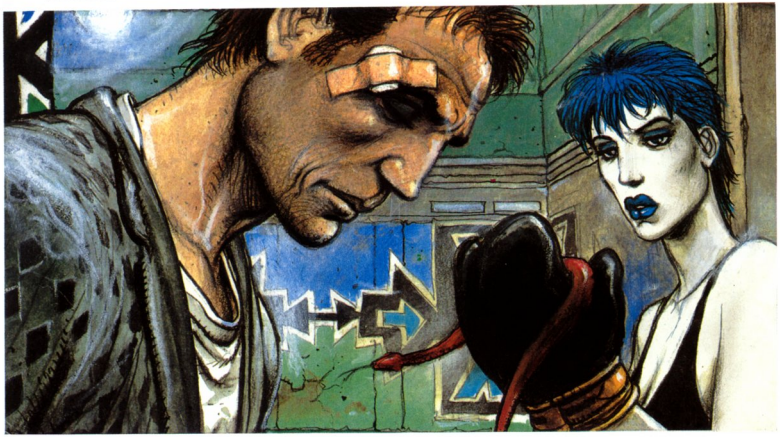
...ANYWAY, HERE IT IS... THE LAST SCENE I SHOT WITH HIM...

...I LIKE THIS SHOT. NICE AND TIGHT.

—COULD HE ACT, AT LEAST?

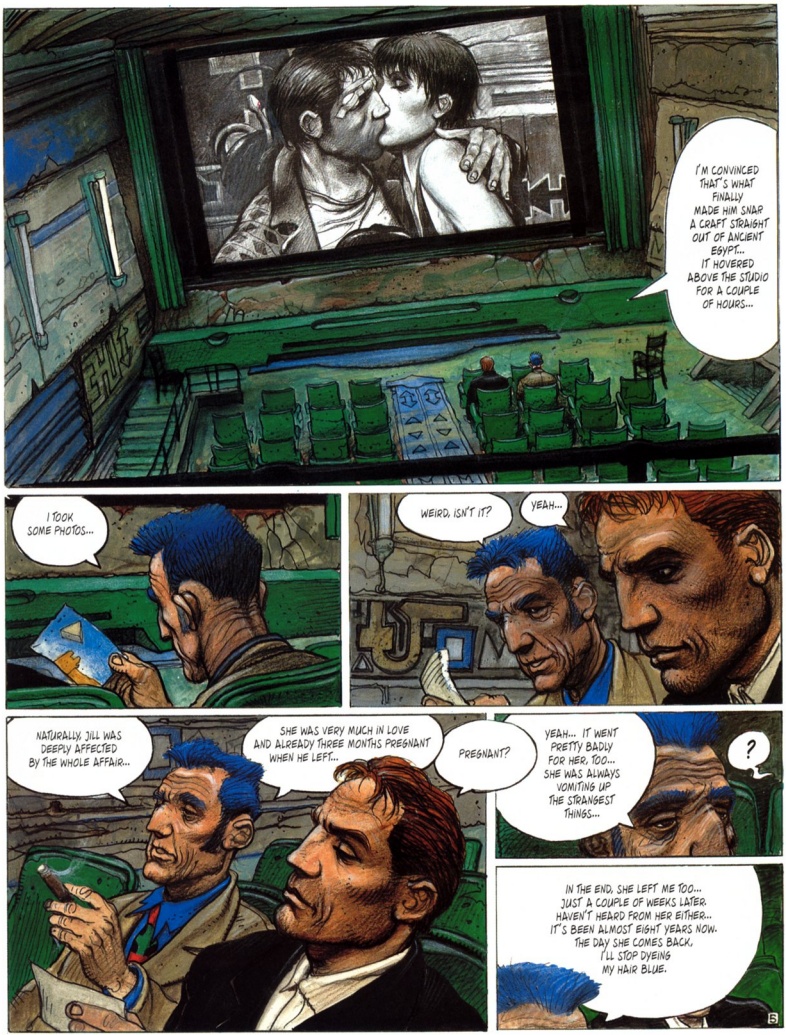
—NOT REALLY... HE COMES OFF A BIT FALSE HERE. IT WASN'T HIS THING, ACTING. ON THE OTHER HAND HE HAD A TERRIFIC EYE FOR IMAGE, AND FOR FRAMING. EVEN DIRECTING, SOMETIMES.
—AND THE GIRL... IS THAT...?
—YEAH, THAT'S HER. JILL BIOSKOP. ANYTHING ON A FILM SET, SHE WAS INTO IT. AND SHE WASN'T A BAD ACTRESS EITHER. NOT BAD AT ALL... I REALLY LIKED HER.

MY PROBLEM IS, THIS FILM IS GOING TO END UP LIKE ALL THE REST: STILL IN DAILIES, TWO-THIRDS SHOT... I'VE GIVEN UP ON EVER GETTING ONE IN THE CAN.



DO YOU REALIZE THAT IN OVER 40 YEARS OF PRODUCING AND DIRECTING, I HAVE NEVER ACTUALLY FINISHED A SINGLE FILM? THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A WAR, A FAMINE, AN ECONOMIC CRISIS, THE SUICIDE OF AN ACTRESS, OR A SHORTAGE OF FILMSTOCK TO MESS EVERYTHING UP. THERE! LOOK! RAN OUT OF COLOR FILM ON THIS ONE, SO I HAD TO FINISH THE SCENE IN BLACK AND WHITE... AND SHORTLY AFTER THAT, NIKOPOL DITCHED US. INTO THIN AIR WITH THAT GREEN-STRIPED CAT OF HIS. NEVER HEARD FROM HIM SINCE. THE FILM WAS OF COURSE ABORTED...

—AND YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE COULD HAVE GONE?
—NONE AT ALL. HE WAS A STRANGE MAN, YOUR...UH, TWIN BROTHER. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE HE WAS DANGEROUSLY UNPREDICTABLE. FOR TWO YEARS HE WAS HERE, LIVING AND WORKING WITH JILL, BUT I NEVER GOT EVEN A GLIMPSE OF WHAT HE KEPT INSIDE THAT HEAD OF HIS... TERRIBLE THINGS, I EXPECT. WILD STORMS... HE COULD GET VERY VIOLENT, BUT HE WAS ALSO VERY SCARED... SCARED OF ANYTHING. OF SHADOWS, OF A DARK ROOM, OF A FLYING PYRAMID...
—A WHAT?
—YOU HEARD ME RIGHT. A FLYING PYRAMID.


I'M CONVINCED THAT'S WHAT FINALLY MADE HIM SNAP A CRAFT STRAIGHT OUT OF ANCIENT EGYPT... IT HOVERED ABOVE THE STUDIO FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS...
I TOOK SOME PHOTOS...
WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
YEAH...
NATURALLY, JILL WAS DEEPLY AFFECTED BY THE WHOLE AFFAIR...
SHE WAS VERY MUCH IN LOVE AND ALREADY THREE MONTHS PREGNANT WHEN HE LEFT...
PREGNANT?
YEAH... IT WENT PRETTY BADLY FOR HER, TOO... SHE WAS ALWAYS VOMITING UP THE STRANGEST THINGS...
?
IN THE END, SHE LEFT ME TOO... JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER. HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER EITHER... IT'S BEEN ALMOST EIGHT YEARS NOW. THE DAY SHE COMES BACK, I'LL STOP DYEING MY HAIR BLUE.
5

IN THE DAYS BEFORE SHE LEFT, SHE RECOUNTED A FEW ODD SNATCHES OF HER LIFE: LONDON, BERLIN, HOW SHE MET YOUR BROTHER, AND SOME RELIGIOUS STORY I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND...
IT WAS ALL A BIT DISJOINTED, BUT IT GRABBED ME... I IMMEDIATELY DECIDED TO MAKE A MOVIE ABOUT IT... AND I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I GET THE FEELING THAT I'M GOING TO FINISH THIS ONE... I HAVE TO FINISH IT... FOR HER!
YOU'LL FINISH. I'M SURE OF IT.
LOOK!... THAT'S LOLA, SHE'S MY JILL. THE MAKE-UP TAKES FOREVER BUT SHE'S A FANTASTIC ACTRESS...
HELLO!
...AND THIS BO, MY NIKOPOL. HE'S NOT BAD EITHER...
UMM...
6

IT'S A PERSONAL INTERPRETATION, OBVIOUSLY. BUT I THINK IT WILL BE GOOD...
OF COURSE IT WILL...
CAN I ASK YOU A FAVOR, BEFORE YOU DISAPPEAR TOO?
GO AHEAD!
YOUR JACKET... YOU DON'T FIND THEM LIKE THAT AROUND HERE... AND IT'S EXACTLY WHAT MY NIKOPOL NEEDS. WILL YOU GIVE IT TO ME? IT CAN BE YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE FILM... AN EXTENSION OF YOUR BROTHER, IF YOU LIKE...
BO WILL GIVE YOU HIS IN EXCHANGE. I'M SURE IT WILL SUIT YOU VERY WELL...
THAT'S FUNNY. I WAS THINKING JUST THE OPPOSITE...

OCTOBER, 2034. NIKO, SON OF NIKOPOL, LEAVES GIANCARLO DONADONI AND DEMBI DOLO STUDIOS WITH SCANTY INFORMATION ON HIS FATHER AND AN ILL-FITTING JACKET ON HIS SHOULDERS...
BEHIND HIM, DRY AS THE DESERT AIR, DONADONI'S FIRST CALL OF THE DAY PIERCES THE BADLY INSULATED WALLS OF SOUNDSTAGE 2: "ACTION!"
DEMBI DOLO
THE HOT AIR HAS A SOUR SMELL (BETWEEN 3.5 AND 4.5 ON THE DOYLE SCALE)...
...AND THE WILDLIFE HAS GREEN STRIPES...
GREEN?

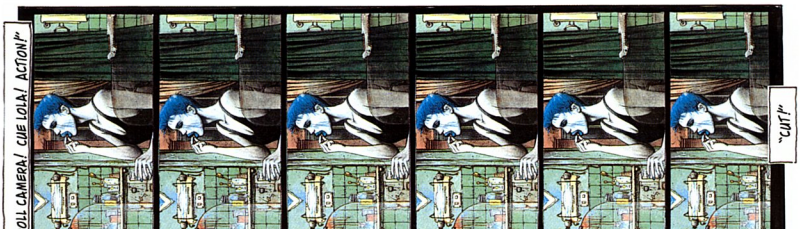
...ALMOST THE SAME GREEN AS THE TRAIN STATION OPPOSITE.
DEMBI DOLO
NIKO'S IDEA IS SIMPLE. HE'LL GET ON THE FIRST TRAIN TO COME. CHANCE WILL DECIDE. IT WILL EITHER TAKE HIM BACK UP NORTH, TO THE SEA, TO ALEXANDRIA; OR DOWN SOUTH, TO THE LAKE, TO THE EQUATOR.
HE HAS NO PREFERENCE AT ALL, WHICH PROFOUNDLY DISTURBS HIM.
IT'S THE SYMPTOM OF AN ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR STATE OF INDECISION: FLEETING, BUT WITH A TENDENCY TO RECUR AND MAKE THINGS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR HIM...
HE CAN TELL THAT THE TRIP IS GOING TO BE AWFUL...
DEMBI DOLO
...BECAUSE THERE ARE FLIES ALREADY, AND THE BIRDS OF PREY DON'T EVEN EAT THEM...

TRANS-AFRICA EXPRESS
AFTER AN INEVITABLE PERIOD OF WAITING, THERE IS NOTHING TO REPORT... EXCEPT PERHAPS THE PASSAGE OF A TAXI-PLANE AT LOW ALTITUDE, TRAILED AT A SEVEN-MINUTE INTERVAL BY TWO OTHER PLANES... "DEFINITELY NOT TAXIS, THOSE ONES," JUDGES NIKO. "MORE LIKE ETHIOPIAN PIRATES."
...OR PERHAPS SOMALIAN ONES...
ANOTHER JUST AS INEVITABLE PERIOD LATER, AS THE SKY OMINOUSLY DARKENS (WELL ABOVE 7 ON THE RANDALL SCALE!), THE TRAIN ARRIVES... OR RATHER, THE TRAINS ARRIVE... BECAUSE IT'S DOWN TO THE WIRE, A PHOTO-FINISH WORTHY OF AN OLYMPIC 100-METER DASH...
DEMBI DOLO
ZOOM!
DEMBI DOLO
THE SOUTH-BOUND WINS... SOUTH! THE EQUATOR IT IS!

2
ALEXANDRIA
CAIRO III
EQUATOR CITY
TRANS AFRICAN
BLUE NILE EXPRESS
THE INTERIOR OF THE COACH DISRUPTS THE DOYLE SCALE... THE BITTER STENCH ALMOST HITS A 10!
FULL...
FULL...
FULL...

FULL!
FULL!
FULL!
THIRTY-THREE FULL COMPARTMENTS LATER...
HEÏLO!
HELLO!
MAY I?
IF YOU DARE...
I WOULD DARE ANYTHING...
...IF IT MEANS SITTING ACROSS FROM YOU.
MY NAME IS NI-
I KNOW: NIKOPOL. I'M YELENA PROKOSH-TOOTOBI. CALL ME YELENA, I'LL CALL YOU NIKO.
?!

IT'S EASIER RIDING WITH REPTILES. THE SMELL'S NOT AS BAD AND THEY KEEP THE FLIES AWAY...
HANG ON... CAN WE GO BACK A BIT?... I JUST GOT ON A TRAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AFRICAN DESERT, AND THE ONLY OTHER HUMAN BEING ABOARD... KNOWS MY NAME! HOW SHOULD I TAKE THAT?
AS JUST A SIMPLE COINCIDENCE. A BIT ODD, MAYBE, BUT COINCIDENCE ALL THE SAME. IT HAPPENS THAT I JUST SPENT A FEW DAYS IN PARIS AND YOU'RE ALL OVER THE AIRWAVES THERE!
WHO, ME? I LEFT PARIS MORE THAN SIX MONTHS AGO! I'M FINISHED WITH ALL THAT... I'M OUT OF POLITICS!
THEN THERE'S TWO THINGS ABOUT YOU THAT YOU DON'T KNOW YET. FIRST, YOUR OLD GOVERNMENT HAS JUST BEEN OVERTHROWN BY THE FASCIST OPPOSITION...
NO SURPRISE THERE!
AND SECOND, YOU YOURSELF HAVE JUST BEEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH FOR MURDERING AN OLD MAN IN HIS HOSPITAL BED A FEW MONTHS AGO... JEAN-FERDINAND CHOUBLANC...
THAT'S HOW I SAW YOUR FACE EVERYWHERE: TELEVISION, NEWSPAPERS, POSTERS... AT THE MOMENT YOU'RE A VERY WANTED MAN...
YOU'RE RIGHT...
...REPTILES ARE GREAT FOR THE FLIES!



Equator City: African city of the Central East, situated on the Equator and the shore of Lake Edward (formerly Lake Idi Amin). Principally African until 2015, and populated by animals and foreigners after that. Approximately 450,000 citizens (4,000 in permanent residence in the central block).

Climate: Unique case in the history of climatology. Since the year 2021, the temperature of the city and its immediate surroundings stays permanently at -6 degrees, the port's waters frozen for almost half a square mile. Snow blizzards frequently occur in the micro-climatic zone (due to vertical displacement, also known as "cork-popping" or "the chimney effect"). Outside the zone is a desert climate, hot to very hot (61 degrees minimum, 117 degrees maximum).

History: The French-German consortium of medicine and technology, DELISLE-ZULKAR, platform of humanitarian aid in Africa since the year 2002, undergoes rapid and thorough expansions until the year 2015. Vast financial contributions from new partnerships gradually enable the consortium to operate independently of international organizations, and it distances itself little by little from its original humanitarian goals. The heart of Equator City (a central block designed by Pranee Lee), was built in 2021 thanks largely to rather dubious capital from the Russo-Japanese communications group, OSSIPOV-KOGUSHI. Two years later, the addition of Ronald KAHEMBA, native of the lake region and charismatic "agent of the irrational", finally convinces the last sceptical elements of African society, and K.K.D.Z.O. (Kahemba-Kogushi-Delisle-Zulkar-Ossipov) is born. Despite a few activities sanctioned by the U.N. and the Human Rights Corporation (most notably two dams in the Himalayas, programs to eliminate disease in Africa, and a remarkably effective literacy campaign, for a total of almost 8 on the Cousteau scale), this ruthless and bloodthirsty consortium, already omnipotent at the dawn of the 30's, very quickly rises to become the farthest-reaching crime syndicate of the Southern Hemisphere.

(to be continued)

I DON'T LIKE IT AT ALL!
BIT OF A SURPRISE, THOUGH...
YES, RATHER...
HMM...
THE SAME PHENOMENON OCCURRED A FEW YEARS AGO IN EUROPE. THERE'S NO DANGER. IT WILL SOON PASS.

KAHEMBA, Ronald

Theologist by education, specialist in mathematics as well as an individual thought and behavior, Ronald Kahemba is the undisputed media chief of K.K.D.Z.O. However, his involvement in the irrational world (Ndembis transcendence) does not grant him universal acceptance.

KOGUSHI, Tina

Founder of Tokyo's Global Center for Industrial Invention, Tina Kogushi is renowned for her abilities both as C.E.O. and ophthoelectrician. A dark mystery shrouds her life between the years 2013 and 2021, after which she reappears, bringing a colossal fortune to K.K.D.Z.O. Despite strong suspicions, her connections to the Sino-Japanese mafia have never been proved.

DELISLE, Jean-Loïc

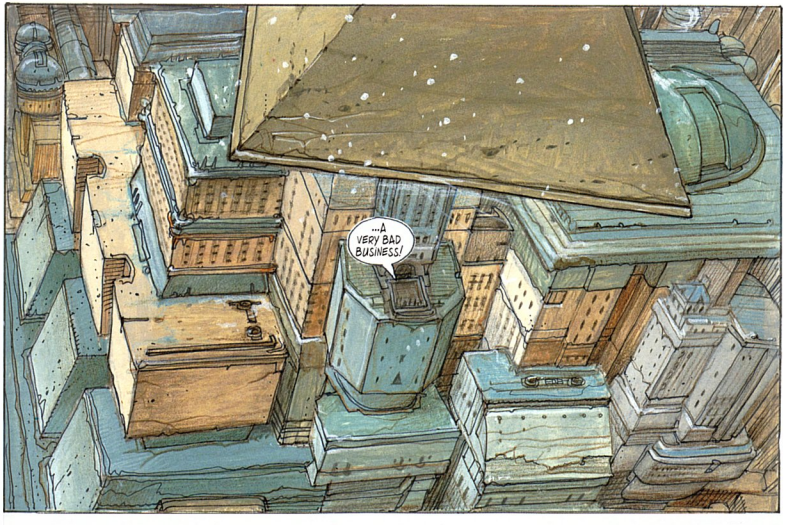
Doctor of surgery and microsurgery, Jean-Loïc Delisle dedicated the first half of his life to humankind, all the while developing a highly advanced network of clinics. His capacities in the field of medical research have always been of a questionable nature. He has not practiced surgery for many years, except upon himself, for cosmetic reasons. He conceals his age, but is said to be over a hundred years old.

ZULKAR, Haris

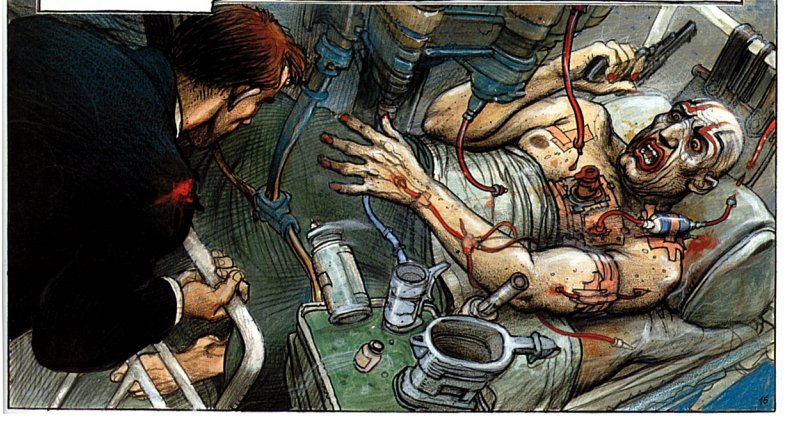
Awarded the Nobel Prize for astrotechnology in 2010, Haris Zulkar engineered an ambitious program of communications satellites for K.K.D.Z.O.'s benefit. However, immediately after the launch the consortium is expelled by the international authorities of the World Space Company, on the grounds of "gross negligence of the rudimentary laws of proper space conduct". K.K.D.Z.O.'s space program continues in flagrant violation of the law. All of Haris Zulkar's diplomas and his Nobel Prize have been retracted.

OSSIPOV, Igor

Son of a famous integrationalist Slavophile at the turn of the century, Igor Ossipov's education is varied and murky, but his intellectual capacities are exceptional. He plays a crucial role in K.K.D.Z.O.'s criminal organization.



"I BELIEVE CHOUBLANC SUMMONED ME BECAUSE HE KNEW HE WAS FINISHED... HE HAD FINALLY ACCEPTED DEATH... BUT NIKOPOL SURVIVING HIM AS THE HEAD OF ALL PARIS? THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT. SO AS SOON AS I ARRIVED, HE TOOK A PISTOL FROM UNDER HIS BEDCLOTHES... HE WAS WEARING THE SAME MAKE-UP AS HE HAD IN HIS DAYS OF GLORY... HE STARTED CRYING, AND INSULTING ME... THEN SHOOTING... FIRST INTO THE AIR, THEN AT ME. HE HIT MY RIGHT SHOULDER, SO I TIPPED HIM OUT OF HIS BED. HE DIED AFTER A FEW SECONDS ON THE FLOOR, DISCONNECTED FROM HIS TUBES, SPILLING HIMSELF ALL OVER THE PLACE."



"IT'S WEIRD. THAT GUY COULD MAKE ME LAUGH RIGHT TO THE VERY END."

—WHAT ABOUT THIS PHOTO THEY'RE SHOWING EVERYWHERE? DOES IT MAKE YOU LAUGH TOO?

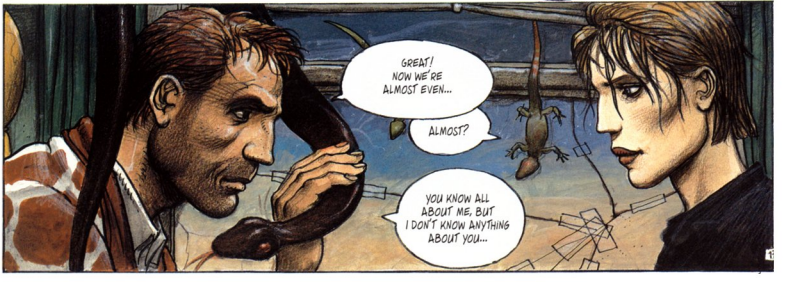
—THAT 'PHOTO' IS A CLUMSILY RETOUCHED VIDEO STILL. LOOK AT CHOUBLANC'S RIGHT HAND. HE WAS HOLDING A PISTOL IN IT AND NOW HE ISN'T... THOSE IDIOTS DON'T EMBARASS ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES...

SHOCKING!

NIKOPOL ASSASSINATES CHOUBLANC

The evidence in black and white.

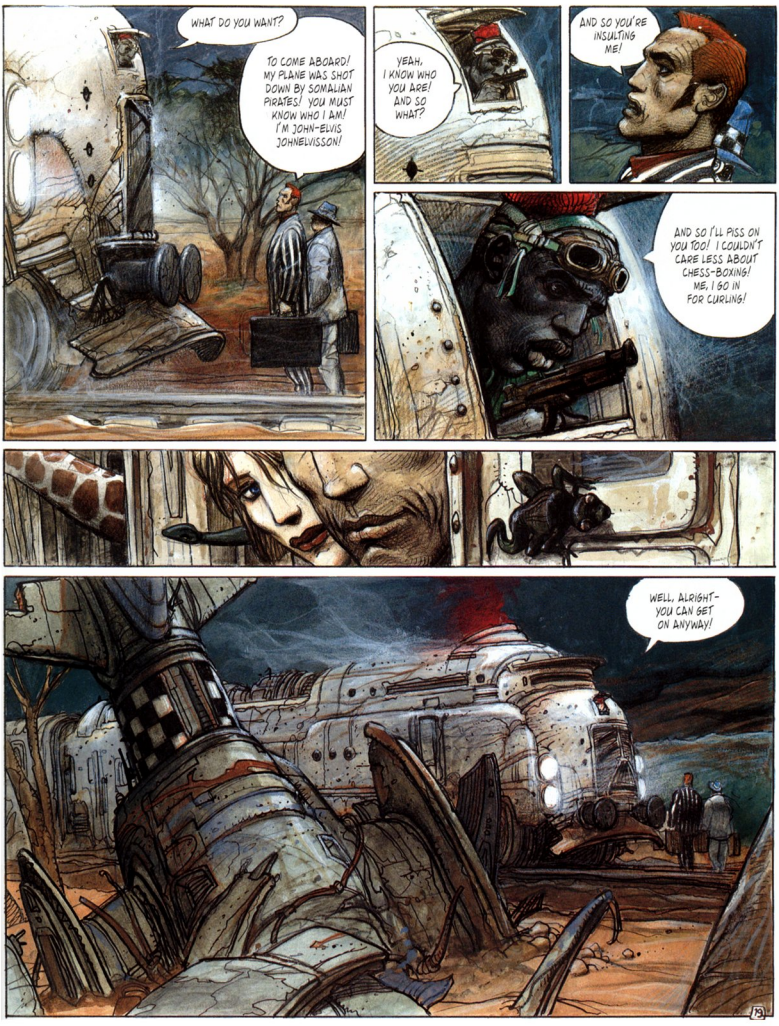
...AND THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF IDIOTS, IN PARIS OR ANYWHERE ELSE.
HOW SHOULD I TAKE THAT?
AS JUST A SIMPLE STATEMENT. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE TYPE WHO USUALLY GETS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF
ACCABLANT!
IN THAT CASE I'LL REASSURE YOU TOO. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE TYPE WHO USUALLY ASSASSINATES PEOPLE.



AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT THE BLUE NILE EXPRESS PASSES MBARARA, THE OLDEST ELEPHANT IN THE WORLD.

YELENA PROKOSH-TOOTOBI WAS BORN IN TRIESTE, IN 2007 OF PARENTS SHE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT. SHE STUDIES GENETICS IN LYON, MARRIES, GETS A DIVORCE, HAS BEAUTIFUL CINDER-BLUE EYES, THINKS NIKO, RESUMES HER STUDIES IN VANCOUVER, AND EARNS TWO DEGREES WITH FAIR TO GOOD GRADES. HER LITTLE SMILE THAT MELTS INTO A BIG GRIN IS ALSO DEVASTATING, AND SHE TRAINS AT PRIVATE CENTERS IN BOSTON AND LAS VEGAS FOR TWO YEARS BEFORE RETURNING TO EUROPE. WITH HER NOSE SLIGHTLY BENT FROM A BRAWL IN MARSEILLES, WHICH IN NIKO'S VIEW JUST ADDS TO HER CHARM, SHE SPECIALIZES IN ABNORMAL GENETICS AND HEREDITARY ANOMALIES OF WHICH THERE IS NO SHORTAGE THESE DAYS. SHE IS EN ROUTE TO EQUATOR CITY, WHERE AN INTERESTING CASE AWAITS HER. AS FOR NIKO, HE IS ALREADY IN LOVE.

AN INTERESTING CASE?
YES, VERY!
THE SUDDEN DECELERATION IS IN THE ORDER OF 33 ON THE STEINER SCALE...
AND YELENA FALLS RIGHT INTO NIKO'S ARMS.


WHAT DO YOU WANT?
TO COME ABOARD! MY PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN BY SOMALIAN PIRATES! YOU MUST KNOW WHO I AM! I'M JOHN-ELVIS JOHNELVISSON!
YEAH, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! AND SO WHAT?
AND SO YOU'RE INSULTING ME!
AND SO I'LL PISS ON YOU TOO! I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT CHESS-BOXING! ME, I GO IN FOR CURLING!
WELL, ALRIGHT- YOU CAN GET ON ANYWAY!

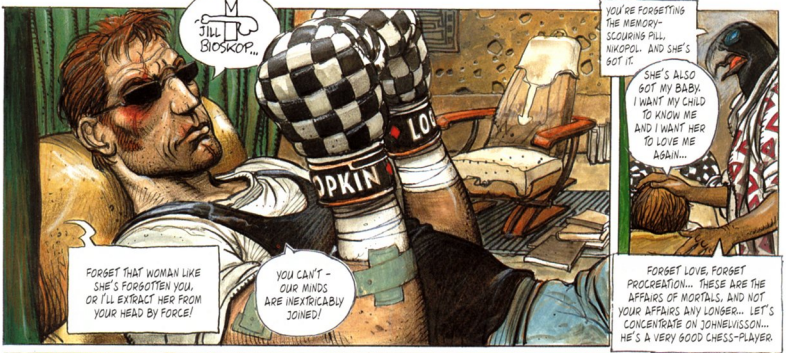
INTELLIGENT, BRILLIANT, BUT A LITTLE TOO TALKATIVE, JOHNELVISSON IS THE CHAMPION OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE IN ALL CATEGORIES OF CHESS-BOXING ENDORSED BY THE C.B.A. (CHESS-BOXING ASSOCIATION). HE IS NEAR THE TOP OF BOTH THE OLD KASPAROV-TYSON SCALE AND THE NEWER BIGGS-TSAO. HE'S DEFENDING HIS TITLE AT A MATCH IN EQUATOR CITY. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE'S A MILLIONAIRE; HIS THOUGHTS ARE QUICK AND BRUTAL, HIS BLOWS EQUALLY SO.

YELENA LISTENS, CAPTIVATED...

"WHAT A WASTE," THINKS NIKO.

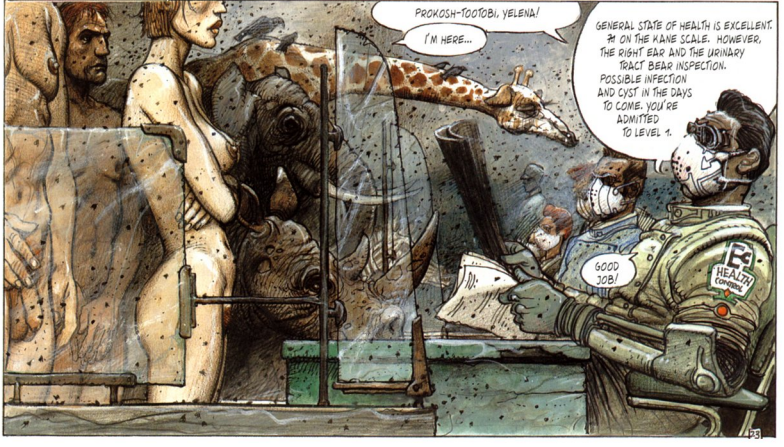
THE NIGHT'S OUTCOME IS PREDICTABLE: NAUSEA, BURNING STOMACH, HEADACHE, BLURRED VISION, BLOODY NOSE...
...AND NIKO HATES HIMSELF ONCE MORE.
THE SKY ABOVE EQUATOR CITY IS LIKE THE INSIDE OF HIS HEAD: FULL OF SUSPICIOUS FOLDS AND SINISTER PRECIPITATION...
HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH...
AND WHEN YELENA SPEAKS HE SAYS THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO HIS HEAD.
HAD A BIT TOO MUCH?
IT'S THE PYRAMID...
WHY - WHAT DOES THE PYRAMID DO TO YOU?
21

IT'S LIKE A GIANT ELECTRICAL BULB HANGING ABOVE THE CITY... AND I'M STANDING RIGHT IN THE CIRCUIT!
WHAT CIRCUIT?
MY VOTE COUNTS DOUBLE!
I VOTE FOR BASTET!
I ABSTAIN!
BASTET!
ANUBIS!
ANUBIS WINS. SO ANUBIS DESCENDS!
SO THAT'S THAT, NIKOPOL. WITH THE NEXT SNOWFALL THEY'LL BE SENDING SOMEONE DOWN. OUR STORY COMES TO ITS CONCLUSION... DOESN'T THAT AT LEAST STIR YOU?
?
22


M
JILL BIOSKOP...
YOU'RE FORGETTING THE MEMORY-SCOURING PILL, NIKOPOL. AND SHE'S GOT IT.
SHE'S ALSO GOT MY BABY. I WANT MY CHILD TO KNOW ME AND I WANT HER TO LOVE ME AGAIN...
FORGET THAT WOMAN LIKE SHE'S FORGOTTEN YOU, OR I'LL EXTRACT HER FROM YOUR HEAD BY FORCE!
YOU CAN'T - OUR MINDS ARE INEXTRICABLY JOINED!
FORGET LOVE, FORGET PROCREATION... THESE ARE THE AFFAIRS OF MORTALS, AND NOT YOUR AFFAIRS ANY LONGER... LET'S CONCENTRATE ON JOHNELVISSON... HE'S A VERY GOOD CHESS-PLAYER.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT ANYMORE!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DREAMED OF BECOMING WORLD CHAMPION... THIS LAST MATCH IS JUST A FORMALITY... I'M GIVING YOU THE TITLE AS MY GOING-AWAY PRESENT...

AT THAT MOMENT NIKO FINDS YELENA BEAUTIFUL, NAKED IN THE DAMPNESS, SURROUNDED BY FLIES... HE DOESN'T DARE LOOK AT HER ANYMORE...


PROKOSH-TOOTOBI, YELENA!
I'M HERE...
GENERAL STATE OF HEALTH IS EXCELLENT. 7 ON THE KANE SCALE. HOWEVER, THE RIGHT EAR AND THE URINARY TRACT BEAR INSPECTION. POSSIBLE INFECTION AND CYST IN THE DAYS TO COME. YOU'RE ADMITTED TO LEVEL 1.
GOOD JOB!
HEALTH COMPANY

JOHN-ELVIS JOHN ELVISSON?
I'M IN A HURRY.
PERFECT HEALTH! 8.7! WONDERFUL. RIGHT NOW LOOPKIN'S HARDLY A 7.. YOU'RE GOING TO DESTROY HIM...
I KNOW...
IVO KOHL? BAD STATE. CRITICAL EVEN. YOU'RE OVERWEIGHT AND IN THE TERMINAL STAGE OF THE "CEMENT SICKNESS": YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH LONGER TO LIVE...
I KNOW!
YOU'RE WITH MR. JOHNELVISSON?
I'M HIS ADVISOR. SO I'M IN A HURRY TOO.
IN THAT CASE, MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON YOU.
THANKS...
NIKOPOL JR.! ALSO IN A HURRY!
MAYBE SO. BUT YOU WE HAVE TO DETAIN. YOU'RE AT 5.2. VERY AVERAGE STATE. PRONE TO INFECTION AND YOU HAVE A VERY HIGH BLOOD-ALCOHOL COUNT...
LEVEL MINUS 1!
TRANSIT
ترنزيت
転送
ТРАНЗИТ
AND SO... NIKO, DISQUALIFIED, IS MADE TO DESCEND ALONG WITH HIS FRIENDS FROM THE BAR, AMONG THE FLIES... AS FOR YELENA, SHE PASSES UPWARDS, WITH HER CROOKED SMILE AND A PREDATOR'S HAND AROUND HER BARE SHOULDER.NIKO IS DEVASTATED!
TONIGHT I'M TAKING YOU TO THE BEST RESTAURANT IN EQUATOR CITY... THEY SERVE EVERYTHING COLD...
"CUE LOLA: ACTION!"
"...LUST!"

K.K.D.Z.O.

EDITION DU JOUR N° 13 — DAILY NEWS — MOIS N° 10 ANNEE N° 34

STATUS REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2034

K.K.D.Z.O.'s Accomplishments in the Southern Hemisphere

RANGOON

Anti-viral microsurgery center (so-called "microscopic killer robot" techniques).

CALCUTTA

"Abortive microchips" into public domain (Indopakistanese government order).

DAR ES SALAAM

Inauguration of information centers on "automedication".

MOMBASA

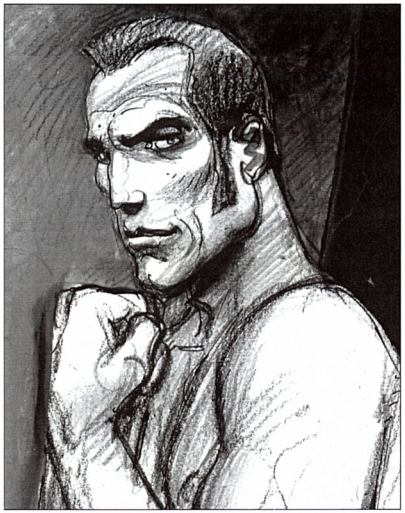
Large-scale decontamination operations.

K.K.D.Z.O.'S REPLY TO THE U.N.

Harshly graded on the U.N.'s humanitarian scale, primarily for alleged deviations from the international standard, the K.K.D.Z.O. consortium has now created its own grading scale which will send the obsolete pretender of world unification back to its precious research committees! A new way of judging the world is born!

The new K.K.D.Z.O. Scale of Global Values, scientifically conceived by Tina KOGUSHI, Haris ZULKAR, and Igor OSSIPOV, takes into account all the legislative, political, social, humanitarian, economical, religious, historical, geographic and climatological data before issuing a scientifically pure, exact, and unequivocal judgment on any noteworthy global event. As an example, K.K.D.Z.O. rated the worldwide efforts of the U.N. over the last ten years as an abysmal 4.2 on a scale of 1 to 10.

This new scale represents, without a doubt, an important step towards the creation of a new world order. K.K.D.Z.O. could be the driving force behind it.



John-Elvis Johnelvisson: 10 out of 10?

JOHN-ELVIS JOHNELVISSON *IN EQUATOR CITY*

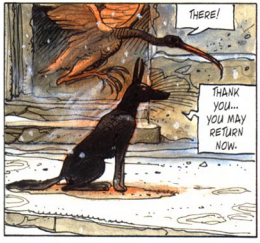
John-Elvis Johnelvisson, one of the most fully-rounded men in the Northern Hemisphere (superlative levels on all scales) was received by Ronald KAHEMBA and Igor OSSIPOV upon his arrival at K.K.D.Z.O. Palace. After performing an a capella rendition of a rock song (his own lyrics), he announced during a brief press conference: "I'm in top shape! An 8 or a 9 at least!" and that "with this Chess-Boxing World Title, I should be approaching a 10 on the scale of all scales of the mind and body!" His opponent, the very withdrawn and mysterious Loopkin, was once again conspicuous in his absence.

K.K.D.Z.O. NOAH'S ARK SOON IN ORBIT!

This young giraffe and baby hippopotamus will be the stars of the satellite "K.K.-D.Z.O. NOAH'S ARK", to be launched within the next few days. This satellite, entirely conceived by Haris ZULKAR and Ronald KAHEMBA, will test new hibernation techniques.

東海岸灘

THAT NIGHT ANUBIS AND THOTH DRIFT DOWN TOWARDS EQUATOR CITY, LIKE THE SNOWFLAKES AROUND THEM.



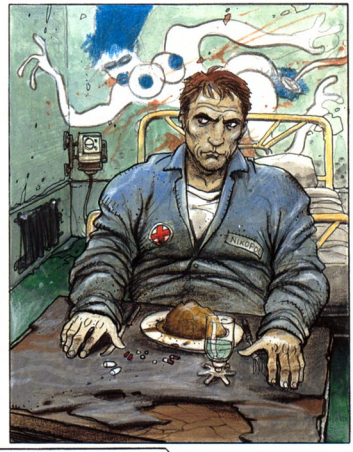
AT THE SAME TIME, NOT FAR AWAY, NIKO ISN'T FEELING HUNGRY. NIKO IS REFUSING THE PRESCRIBED TREATMENT, NIKO IS THINKING OF YELENA, NIKO IS FEELING WORRIED... HE FEELS CONFUSED AND TRAPPED AND SPIED UPON...

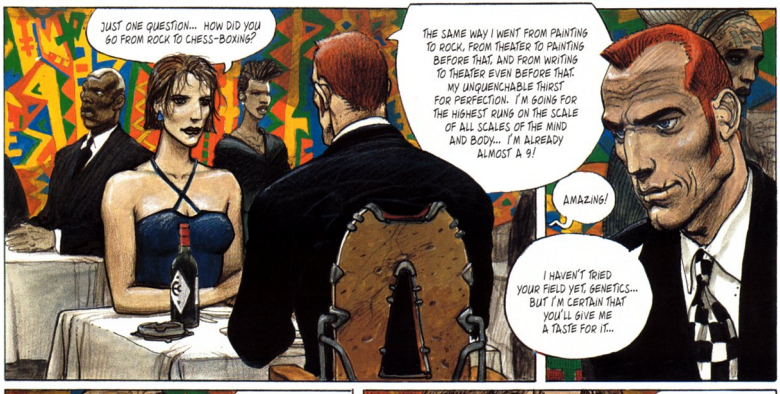
IN HIS ROOM, ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM, A PIECE OF GRAFFITI WATCHES HIM...

A PIECE OF GRAFFITI WITH BLUE HAIR, BLUE NIPPLES, BLUE PUBIC HAIR... AND WHITE SKIN...

IS HE ON THE RIGHT TRACK? JILL BIOSKOR. HIS FATHER... THE WHOLE THING...

BUT WHAT DOES ANY OF THAT MATTER NOW? IT'S YELENA HE'S THINKING ABOUT... YELENA!




JUST ONE QUESTION... HOW DID YOU GO FROM ROCK TO CHESS-BOXING?
THE SAME WAY I WENT FROM PAINTING TO ROCK, FROM THEATER TO PAINTING BEFORE THAT, AND FROM WRITING TO THEATER EVEN BEFORE THAT. MY UNQUENCHABLE THIRST FOR PERFECTION. I'M GOING FOR THE HIGHEST RUNG ON THE SCALE OF ALL SCALES OF THE MIND AND BODY... I'M ALREADY ALMOST A 9!
AMAZING!
I HAVEN'T TRIED YOUR FIELD YET, GENETICS... BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT YOU'LL GIVE ME A TASTE FOR IT...

AND WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
THAT'S JUST IT, I DON'T KNOW... THEY TOLD ME ABOUT AN INCIDENT THAT WAS HUSHED UP A FEW YEARS AGO... AN EXTREMELY ABNORMAL BIRTH, BUT IT'S ALL VERY MURKY... NOT MUCH MATERIAL TO CLIMB SCALES WITH, I'M AFRAID.

HOW DO YOU LIKE MY LITTLE MURAL? I DID IT JUST AFTER THE BIRTH, AND THAT FAMOUS SLAUGHTER OF YOURS... THE BROWN SPOTS ARE REAL BLOOD...

THELMA BRIDGES, HEAD NURSE, SURROGATE MOTHER TO MANY. SHE CAN REMEMBER ANYTHING, EXCEPT WHAT SHE HASN'T SEEN, AND EVEN THAT SHE CAN EASILY IMAGINE WITH THE HELP OF HER 'PROFOUND ARTISTIC SENSE'.

HER STORY, MORE OR LESS:

"IT HAPPENED SEVEN YEARS AGO... JILL BIOSKOP WAS GIVING BIRTH TO SOMETHING... 'NOT QUITE NATURAL'. ALL THE SPECIALISTS CAME RUNNING, CROWDING BETWEEN HER THIGHS TO REMOVE 'THE SPECIMEN'. AND THEY DID."

"THAT'S WHEN YOU WENT CRAZY. YOU BROKE DOWN THE DOORS AND KILLED EVERYONE IN THE WING. NO WITNESSES! YOUR EYES WERE BRIMMING FIRE... YOU SEIZED JILL BIOSKOP AND HER BLOOD-SOAKED CREATURE WRAPPED UP IN A SHEET, AND DISAPPEARED..."

YOU'VE GOT ME MIXED-UP IT WASN'T ME, BUT MY FATHER... IT'S HORUS'S DOING... YOU KNOW, THE PARANOID GOD WHO TAKES OVER THE BODIES OF MORTALS...

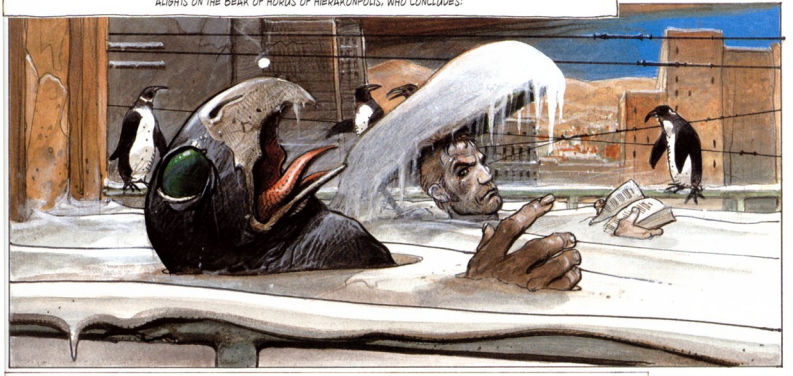
"BUT OF COURSE!" IS THELMA BRIDGES' REPLY.

IT'S HIM!
DO YOU HEAR HIS INHUMAN CRY? IT'S ANUBIS, IN HIS JACKAL FORM... HE WANTS TO TALK...
I'M HAVING A HARD TIME READING... I GET MY LETTERS MIXED-UP: O'S WITH Q'S, AND S'S WITH Z'S TOO... I MISUNDERSTAND WORDS AND LOSE THEIR MEANINGS...
LOOPKIN
HORUS! I WANT IT OVER BETWEEN US! LET'S SPLIT UP!
TRUE. THE TIME HAS COME. I MUST MAKE A DECISION... TONIGHT, NIKOPOL, TONIGHT...
IF HE WOULD ONLY STOP HOWLING... I CANNOT BEAR IT...
I WANT TO LIVE KNOWING THAT I'M GOING TO DIE! I WANT TO LOVE AND BE LOVED. I DON'T WANT TO KEEP SUFFERING FROM THE HEAT IN MINUS TWENTY DEGREES UNDER THE SNOW! I WANT TO FIND JILL BIZKOP AND MY CHILD! I WANT JILL!
JILL, LILL, LIJJ?

MANY CRIES AND THEIR DISTURBING ECHOES SOUNDED THAT NIGHT OVER EQUATOR CITY. THE SNOW FELL THICKER, AND THE TEMPERATURE DROPPED LOWER (-56 ON THE DANIEL FAHRENHEIT SCALE). THERE WERE ALSO MORE CRACKS IN THE SKY THAN USUAL (FROM 6.6 UP TO 9) AND SOME NEW THREATENING FOLDS (FROM SUSPICIOUS TO VERY SUSPICIOUS)... RONALD KAHEMBA, AGENT OF THE IRRATIONAL, WAS FORCED TO CALL UPON VIDYE MUKULU, SUPREME SKY-BEING, IN HOPES OF CALMING THE TEMPEST... ALL IN VAIN. HE SPENT THE NIGHT UNCOMFORTABLY, TOSSED BETWEEN FOLDS AND CREVASSES...
IT IS SAID THAT THE INVISIBLE DIALOGUE BETWEEN HORUS AND ANUBIS TOOK PLACE IN DIVINE VIOLENCE. MORE THAN ONCE, THE UNFORTUNATE NIKOPOL'S SKULL CAME CLOSE TO SPLITTING...

AS FOR THE REST, WE FIND THAT YELENA PROKOSH-TOOTOBI WAS COLD, ALONE IN HER BED, AND THAT NIKO SUFFERED TERRIBLE NIGHTMARES IN HIS. OBSCENE NIGHTMARES, PAINTED BY THE HAND OF THELMA BRIDGES... EVEN GIANCARLO DONADONI, IN DEMBI DOLO, DIDN'T SHUT HIS EYES ALL NIGHT.

THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, SUNRISE COMES RIGHT ON TIME. TO MARK THE END OF A LONG AND FINAL CONVERSATION, A SINGLE SNOWFLAKE ALIGHTS ON THE BEAK OF HORUS OF HIERAKONPOLIS, WHO CONCLUDES:



"YOU SEE, NIKOPOL... THANKS TO YOU I HAVE KNOWN MANY THINGS OF EARTH AND THE PEOPLE UPON IT... FOR ME ELEVEN YEARS IS LIKE THE BLINK OF AN EYE, BUT I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE SMELLS, SOUNDS, AND SENSATIONS I SHARED WITH YOU... EVEN IF I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND LOVE ALL TOO WELL... BELIEVE ME, YOU'VE BEEN A GOOD HOST... WE ROAMED THIS PLANET FAR AND WIDE, LONG AND HARD... FAR TOO HARD... AND YOU KNOW THAT I'VE SEEN ENOUGH TO MAKE ANY NORMAL GOD PISS HIS PANTS. YOU HUMANS ARE UTTERLY INEQUIPPED TO RUN THIS WORLD. EVERYTHING YOU TOUCH ROTS AWAY... I WANTED TO MAKE PEACE WITH HUMANS, BUT THEY'RE TOO SMALL-MINDED... THEY WILL NEVER BE RID OF THEIR UNCHECKED PATRIOTISM, THEIR STUBBORN FAITH, THEIR INEPTITUDE FOR POWER AND THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS... FOR YOUR LIFESPAN IS YOUR WEAKEST POINT... YOU DON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO RETAIN OR EVEN REALIZE THE VALUE OF WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT... AH, WELL! WE, THE GODS, HAVE MADE YOU BADLY. A TERRIBLE THING TO ADMIT, BUT ADMIT IT I MUST. NOW, LISTEN CAREFULLY, NIKOPOL. I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU WITH THE POWERS YOU NEED... YOU WILL BREATHE AT HALF YOUR RATE; LITTLE BY LITTLE, YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING AT HALF YOUR RATE. AND THEN EVEN SLOWER THAN THAT. YOUR HEART WILL MARK ONE BEAT EVERY TWO MINUTES. I DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF MAN THIS SLOWED EXISTENCE WILL MAKE YOU, BUT IT IS TIME THAT WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS. MY REBELLION COMES TO ITS END, AND I PREPARE MYSELF TO FACE THE JUDGMENT OF MY OWN KIND. AT BEST I WILL BE SENTENCED TO A FEW FRACTIONS OF ETERNITY, BUT ABOVE ALL: HARMONY MUST BE RESTORED FROM CHAOS, WE MUST REENTER THE 'NUN', IN SHORT REPLACE HUMANKIND WITH SOMETHING BETTER. ORDER, NIKOPOL! DO YOU UNDERSTAND? A PERFECT AND BALANCED ORDER FOR WHICH I WILL PROVIDE THE INSPIRATION!"

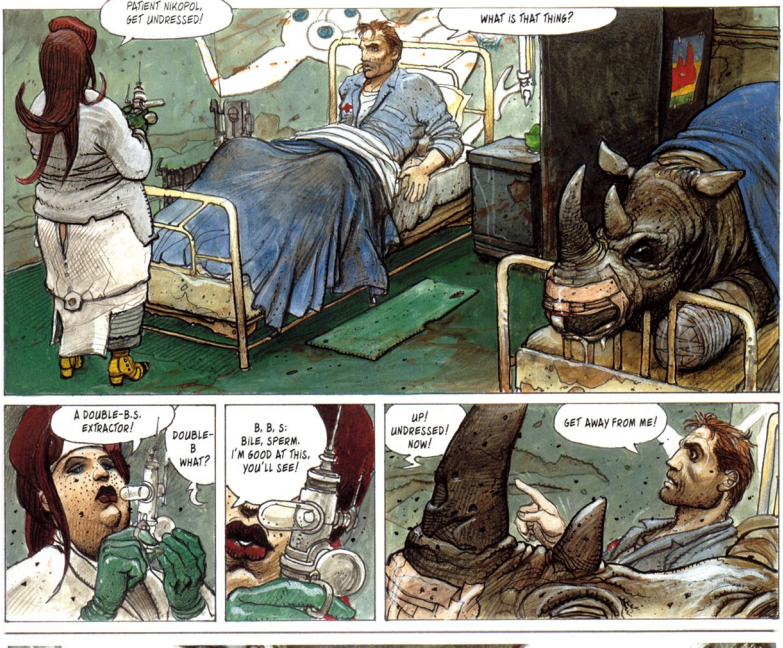
"QBPEB? I PON'T GIVE A CBAD ARQUT QBPEB! I'M GQING TQ JIVE, JQVE, ANP PIE IN CQMDJETE ANP UTTEB CHAQZ!" *

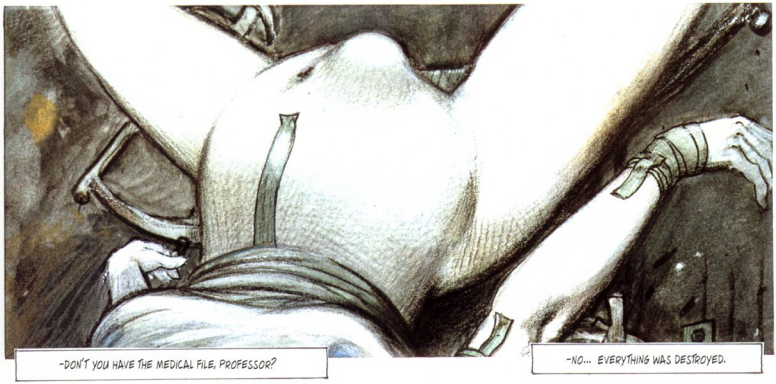
* IN ADDITION TO MIXING HIS O'S AND Q'S, S'S AND Z'S, J'S AND I'S, NIKOPOL IS ALSO CONFUSING HIS B'S AND R'S, AND HIS P'S AND D'S.

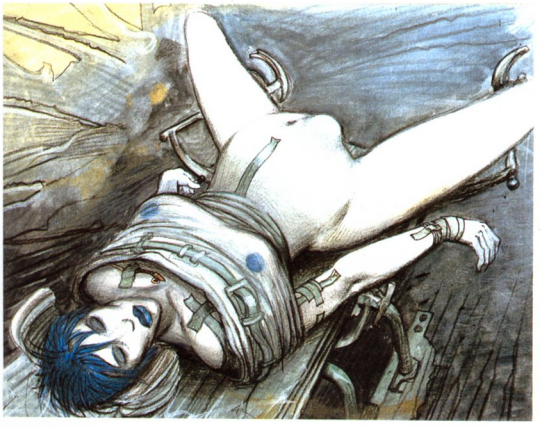
"IT'S DECIDED! TOMORROW NIGHT I GIVE YOU THE TITLE, AND THEN I TAKE MY LEAVE... YOU WILL BE MASTER OF YOUR FATE AGAIN, AND IMMORTAL AS WELL. I'LL MAKE YOU FORGET ME, FORGET YOUR PAST, AND FORGET JILL BIOSKOR."

"TQ FQBGET UJJ. I'P HAVE TQ FQBGET MYZEJF!"

"THEN I'LL MAKE YOU FORGET YOURSELF TOO!"


PATIENT NIKOPOL, GET UNDRESSED!
WHAT IS THAT THING?
A DOUBLE-B.S. EXTRACTOR!
DOUBLE-B WHAT?
B. B. S: BILE, SPERM. I'M GOOD AT THIS, YOU'LL SEE!
UP! UNDRESSED! NOW!
GET AWAY FROM ME!


-DON'T YOU HAVE THE MEDICAL FILE, PROFESSOR?
-NO... EVERYTHING WAS DESTROYED.



...NOTHING REMAINS EXCEPT THESE FAIRLY COMMONPLACE PHOTOS... TAKEN JUST BEFORE THE DELIVERY... BEFORE THE EVENT...

-WHAT ABOUT WITNESSES? ALL DEAD?

-ALL OF THEM. EXCEPT A NURSE DOWN IN LEVEL MINUS 1... A CERTAIN THELMA BRIDGES... NOT VERY RELIABLE IF YOU ASK ME...

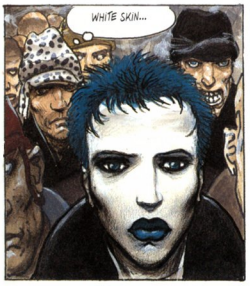
-I'LL TRY HER ANYWAY... THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.

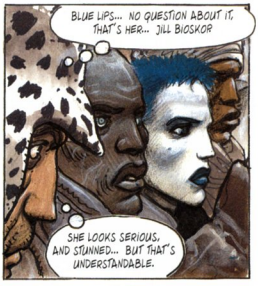
-GOOD LUCK... BUT EVEN WITH THAT BULGE I DON'T THING WE'RE DEALING WITH ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING GENETIC ANOMALIES. I PUT IT AT LESS THAN 5 ON THE KHALED SCALE... NOWADAYS WE DON'T EVEN LOOK AT ANYTHING BELOW 8 OR 8 1/2!

SHE WAS IMPALED ON A PATIENT... A RHINOCEROS... RIGHT AFTER A SCUFFLE WITH ANOTHER PATIENT...
...WHO JUST RAN OUT OF HERE DISGUISED AS A GIRAFFE.
A GIRAFFE?
A GIRAFFE.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING A LITTLE MORE SUBDUED?
CROCODILE, TIGER, PANTHER...
PANTHER, THEN. PLAIN BLACK. IMITATION.
NIKO TAKES A LONG LOOK IN THE MIRROR. HE DOESN'T SEE A KILLER'S FACE. BUT HE HAS TWO DEAD BODIES BEHIND HIM ALREADY. UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENTS... TRICKS OF FATE... THAT'S ALL!
IS IT TO KEEP YOUR EDGE THAT YOU AREN'T SHAVING?
MY EDGE?
FOR THE FIGHT TOMORROW NIGHT! YOU'RE LOOPKIN, RIGHT?
LOOPKIN? LOPOKIN, KNOOLIP NOLIKOP NIKOPOL!
KKDZO PRESENTS
LOOPKIN - JOHNELVISSON
CHESS-BOXING
WORLD-CHAMPIONSHIP
CBA
DIRECT-LIVE! GRAND ECRAN KAHEMBA PLACE
KKDZO HALL
24h

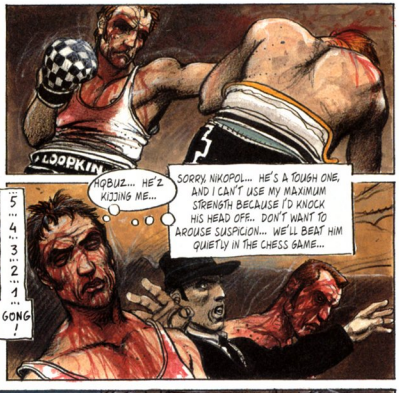
"NIKO'S GONE CRAZY!" THINKS YELENA, WATCHING NIKOPOL'S ANAGRAM IN THE RING.

THE NUMBERS APPROACH THE TOPS OF THE SCALES: 9.7 ON THE BIGGS (VIOLENCE); 9.4 ON THE SERBO-CROAT (HATE); 8.8 ON THE PRELJOCAJ (LEGWORK); 9.3 ON THE POPPI (TACTICS) AND 9.9 ON THE SISINGA-MANGARAJA (STYLE).


WHITE SKIN...


BLUE LIPS... NO QUESTION ABOUT IT. THAT'S HER... JILL BIOSKOP
SHE LOOKS SERIOUS, AND STUNNED... BUT THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.

IT IS INDEED UNDERSTANDABLE. DURING THE LAST FEW SECONDS OF THE BOUT VIOLENCE IS SO EXTREME THAT IT BLOWS THE TOP RIGHT OFF THE BIGGS SCALE! (2.7 ON THE SCALE OF SCALE DISRUPTION.)
LOOK AT THAT! ABOVE LOOPKIN!
I DON'T SEE ANY-THING...


LOOPKIN
HOBUZ... HE'Z KIJJING ME...
SORRY, NIKOPOL... HE'S A TOUGH ONE, AND I CAN'T USE MY MAXIMUM STRENGTH BECAUSE I'D KNOCK HIS HEAD OFF.. DON'T WANT TO AROUSE SUSPICION... WE'LL BEAT HIM QUIETLY IN THE CHESS GAME...
5...4...3...2...1... GONG!

KKDZO
DAILY NEWS
INTERMISSION ON THE BIG SCREEN DURING THE WAIT FOR THE MATCH OF WITS... NIKO WATCHES AS JILL, HAVING SEEN ENOUGH, LEAVES THE SQUARE. "SHOULD I MAKE CONTACT, OR NOT?"

I'LL FOLLOW HER...
AAAGGHH!
SETTLE DOWN, GOGOL!
DON'T WORRY, HE CAN'T HURT YOU. HIS CLAWS ARE ANTISEPTIC, TREATED WITH DISINFECTANT AND PAIN RELIEVER...
WHEN SHOULD I EXPECT THE DOCTOR'S BILL?
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?
TO MEET YOU... MY NAME IS Ni..
NIKOPOL JUNIOR, I KNOW... I RECOGNIZED YOU...
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR YOUR FATHER?
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR... BUT THAT WOULD DO FOR A START... HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE DOING SO WELL... IS HE STILL POSSESSED BY... THAT GOD?

MORE THAN EVER... AND HE'S NOT READY TO GET RID OF IT, EITHER... YOUR FATHER'S GONE, NIKO... ADVISE YOU NOT TO APPROACH HIM, TO GET AWAY FROM HERE, AND TO FORGET HIM...
FORGET HIM?
YES, FORGET HIM.
AND YOU?
ME, WHAT?
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP YOU, AT LEAST?
HELP ME WHAT? FORGET?
I DON'T KNOW...
I HAVE WHAT I NEED TO FORGET...
JUST ONE MORE QUESTION, THEN...
NO!
KKDZO SURGERY
SO NIKO WILL NEVER FIND OUT ABOUT THE CHILD... HE'S CERTAIN HE WILL NEVER SEE JILL BIOSKOP AGAIN... THE IMAGE OF HER IN HIS HEAD HAS FADED JUST AS SHE DID INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE STAIRWELL... AND THE OBSESSIVE PICTURE OF YELENA RISES ONCE AGAIN TO THE SURFACE...
"YELENA!"
BUT THE IMAGE OF HIS FATHER ON THE SCREEN IS EVEN CLEARER (1250 LINES ON THE K.W.D.Z.O. FLAT-SCREEN TV!)
WE'RE WASTING TIME NIKOPOL! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? TAKE OUT THE KNIGHT OR THE BISHOP!
NO! THE KNIGHT CAN BIDE QUT QN THE RIZHQD!
RIZHQD QN THE KNIGHT'Z PIAGZNAJ...
?

AND WHAM!
THE RULES, NIKOPOL! REMEMBER THE RULES! HURRY, OR I'LL HAVE TO USE EXTREME MEASURES!
LIJJ...
TOO LATE!
THERE, NIKOPOL...
NOT EXACTLY AS I HAD ANTICIPATED, BUT YOU'RE WORLD CHAMPION NOW...
JOHN-ELVIS?
JHNÉ/VI
HE'S CRAZY...
HORUS CHEATED!
?
WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO MURDER OTHER BEINGS... IT'S NOT RIGHT!

KKDZO

EDITION DU JOUR N°27 — DAILY NEWS — MOIS N°10 ANNEE N°34

KAHEMBA SUSPICIOUS!

Ronald KAHEMBA came forward against the Chess-Boxing Association's decision to validate Loopkin's dubious victory over Johnelvisson. Professor Jean-Loïc DELISLE himself will perform the autopsy on the talented but unfortunate champion.

IVO KOHL: DEATH BY CEMENT SICKNESS

Ivo Kohl, John-Elvis Johnelvisson's chess advisor, succumbed to a deadly fit of "Cement Sickness" at the end of the match between his protégé and the very withdrawn and mysterious Loopkin.

The autopsy of the concrete remains of Ivo Kohl will be performed by Professor Jean-Loïc DELISLE himself, who has worked for many years on treating this exceedingly rare malady.

Face fragments of Ivo Kohl (upper lip, cheek, nose). In the background, J. Johnelvisson's corpse awaits autopsy.

"I believe that Johnelvisson died approximately one and thirty-two hundredths of a second before his left eye was impaled on the Black Queen," declares the Professor. "It's this first death, the more suspicious one, that interests me."

EQUATOR CITY AWAITS NKONO JR.

The Ndembusi irrationalist K. N. Nkono Jr. is expected today in Equator City, according to a reliable source. The precipitated arrival of this specialist of reincarnation, possession, and black magic, at Ronald KAHEMBA's request, is apparently linked to Johnelvisson's death and certain "suspicious behavior" of Loopkin's.

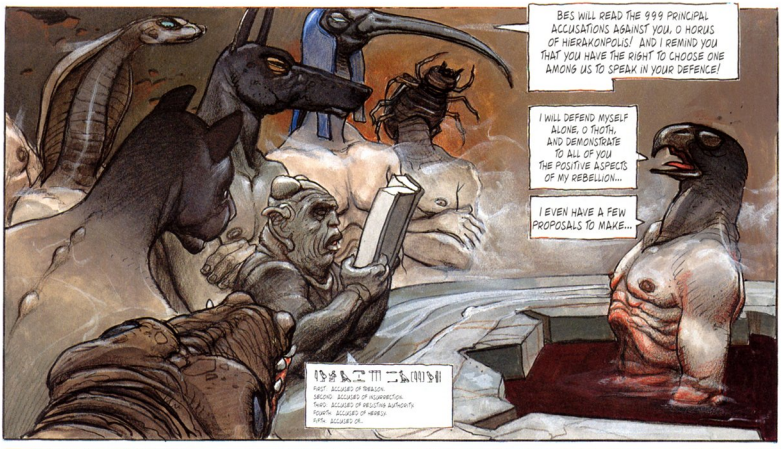
"OKAY! ENOUGH! WE'LL FINISH IT IN BLACK AND WHITE! LOLA, BO, READY FOR THE BIG KISS? - MAKE IT LONG - VERY LONG! ROLL CAMERA. AND... ACTION!"
THAT "ACTION!" STILL AS DRY AS THE DESERT AIR, WILL BE GIANCARLO DONADONI'S LAST COMMAND. THE CALL TO "CUT!" NEVER COMES.
YES, I GOT YOUR NIGHTMARE, GOGO!... ARE YOU SURE OF WHAT YOU SAW?
POSITIVE! HE FELL IN THE MIDDLE OF A TAKE... HEART ATTACK, DEAD IN AN INSTANT...
POOR DONADONI...
WE MUST GO BACK TO DEMBI DOLO... DID HE FINISH HIS FILM, AT LEAST?
NO!
AND NIKOPOL? WHAT DO I DO ABOUT NIKOPOL?
ERASE?
ERASE!
YES, ERASE!

ANUBIS...
HORUS...
HERE AND NOW I LEAVE YOU, NIKOPOL... I WILL MAKE YOU FORGET... I WILL ERASE YOUR MEMORY AND YOUR CONSCIENCE... YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO REBUILD ON YOUR OWN, FROM SCRATCH. I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH THE TOOLS TO DO IT...
JET'Z GET ON WITH IT!
FAREWELL NIKOPOL.
YEZ, FABEWEJJ...
DAD?! ARE YOU OKAY?
DO YOU RECOGNIZE ME?
YOU ARE WISE TO SURRENDER, HORUS...
PON'T FORGET ME, LIJJ...
WE HAVE GREAT THINGS TO DO TOGETHER, ANUBIS...
DON'T OVERDO IT, HORUS. READY?
READY.

WITHIN A COLORLESS LIGHTNING FLASH, THERE IS A SLOW AERIAL DANCE...
"INCREDIBLE!"
VERY SURPRISING INDEED, MASTER KAHEMBA... EGYPTIAN GODS... AND NOT MINOR ONES EITHER.
THIS IS AT THE TOP OF ALL THE SCALES OF THE IRRATIONAL. EVEN MINE...
WHAT DO YOU ADVISE?
ABOVE ALL, DON'T CONFRONT THEM DIRECTLY... WE ARE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT THE HUMAN DOWN THERE, LOOPKIN?
THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY... AN IMMORTAL IN THIS CITY WOULD BE LIKE A VIRUS IN A HEALTHY ORGAN... YOU CAN'T ELIMINATE HIM, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE HIM AWAY. ISOLATE HIM... I SEE TWO SOLUTIONS: EITHER BURY HIM DEEP UNDERGROUND OR SHOOT HIM HIGH INTO THE AIR... AND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!
DON'T YOU HAVE A SATELLITE LAUNCH COMING UP?
YES!

OVER THE NEXT 72 HOURS, THE SKY ABOVE EQUATOR CITY SEALS UP ITS CRACKS, SMOOTHS OVER ITS FOLDS, AND RESUMES A HEALTHY PLACE ON THE COLOR SCALE WITH THE ADDITION OF CERULEUM BLUE * 5 AND TITANIUM WHITE. AFTER THAT THE ONLY TEMPEST IS THE ONE WITHIN THE PYRAMID, AS THE CASE AGAINST HORUS IS PREPARED.
OKAY... YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING, YOU DON'T TALK, YOU DON'T EAT OR SLEEP YOU HARDLY BREATHE, YOUR HEART BEATS WHEN IT FEELS LIKE IT, AND YOU HAVEN'T GROWN EVEN ONE SECOND OLDER! CAN YOU EVEN THINK?
I AM REBUILDING MYSELF!
GOOD IDEA! WE'LL BOTH REBUILD OURSELVES, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY... AS FOR ME I'M GOING TO START WITH A WOMAN, AND LOVE... YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT IT TOO... IT WOULDN'T DO YOU ANY HARM...
SEE YOU!
NIKO GOES FROM HOTEL TO HOTEL SEEKING YELENA, FRESH AND CONFIDENT. THE LAST FEW DAYS' EVENTS, HIS FATHER, AND THE BRIEF TRANSIT OF ANUBIS THROUGH HIS BODY ALL BLUR INTO AN ABSTRACT SATISFACTION. EVEN THE SIGHT OF THE PYRAMID, UP IN THE BLUE SKY, MAKES HIM SMILE...
45

MISS PROKOSH-TOOTOBI? YES, SHE'S STAYING WITH US... BUT SHE'S GONE OUT FOR THE DAY...
I'D LIKE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE...
JUST FILL OUT THIS FORM, PLEASE... NAME, SURNAME, SEX, VITAL STATISTICS, BLOOD GROUP AGE...
AGE?
YES, AGE...
FORTY YEARS OLD! NIKO REALIZES STUPIDLY THAT HE'S JUST TURNING FORTY TODAY!
IT'S A SIGN! YELENA WILL CALL HIM BACK TONIGHT!... HE'S SO SURE OF IT THAT HE DOESN'T HEAR ANYONE COMING UP BEHIND HIM...
NOR DOES HE SUSPECT THAT IN EXACTLY FIVE SECONDS HIS LIFE WILL BE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE...
ZERO!
?
LOOPKIN!
MMH...
NIKO, SON OF NIKOPOL, IN HIS 41ST YEAR AND ON THE EQUATOR, FEELS AN ICY COLD SPREADING THROUGHOUT HIS ORGANS... HE FOUNDERS IN THE LOWER REGIONS OF THE DANIEL FAHRENHEIT SCALE... "YELENA!"


BES WILL READ THE 999 PRINCIPAL ACCUSATIONS AGAINST YOU, O HORUS OF HIERAKONPOLIS! AND I REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE ONE AMONG US TO SPEAK IN YOUR DEFENCE!
I WILL DEFEND MYSELF ALONE, O THOTH, AND DEMONSTRATE TO ALL OF YOU THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF MY REBELLION...
I EVEN HAVE A FEW PROPOSALS TO MAKE...
FIRST: ACCUSED OF TREASON
SECOND: ACCUSED OF MALEDICTION
THIRD: ACCUSED OF INSULTING AUTHORITY
FOURTH: ACCUSED OF MURDER
FIFTH: ACCUSED OF...

ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, KAHEMBA? THE PYRAMID IS ALMOST IN THE CENTER OF THE LAUNCH TRAJECTORY...
OSSIPOV IS RIGHT... PERHAPS WE SHOULD DELAY THE FIRING...
IMPOSSIBLE! WE HAVE A VIRUS TO RID OURSELVES OF AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE... BEFORE IT BECOMES THE EPICENTER OF A PLAGUE...
WE'LL JUST CLIP THE PYRAMID'S WINGS A BIT, THAT'S ALL...

MISS! A MESSAGE FOR YOU!

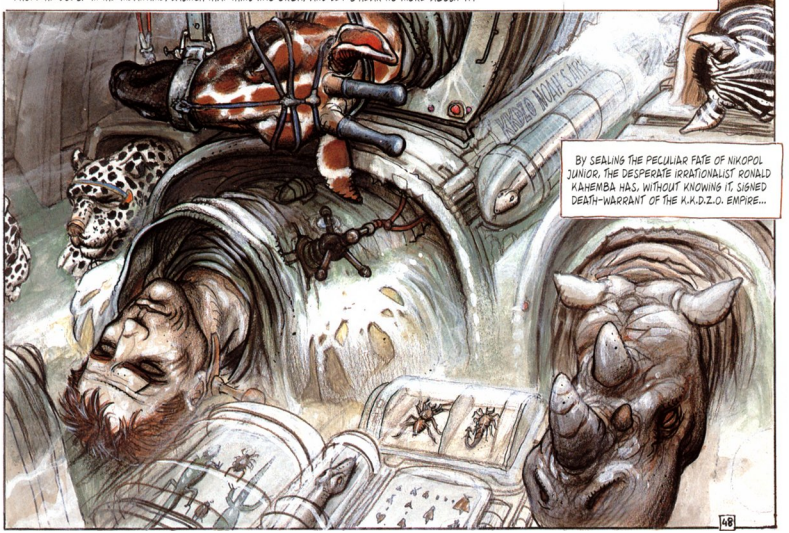
Niko
tel
991-01-3

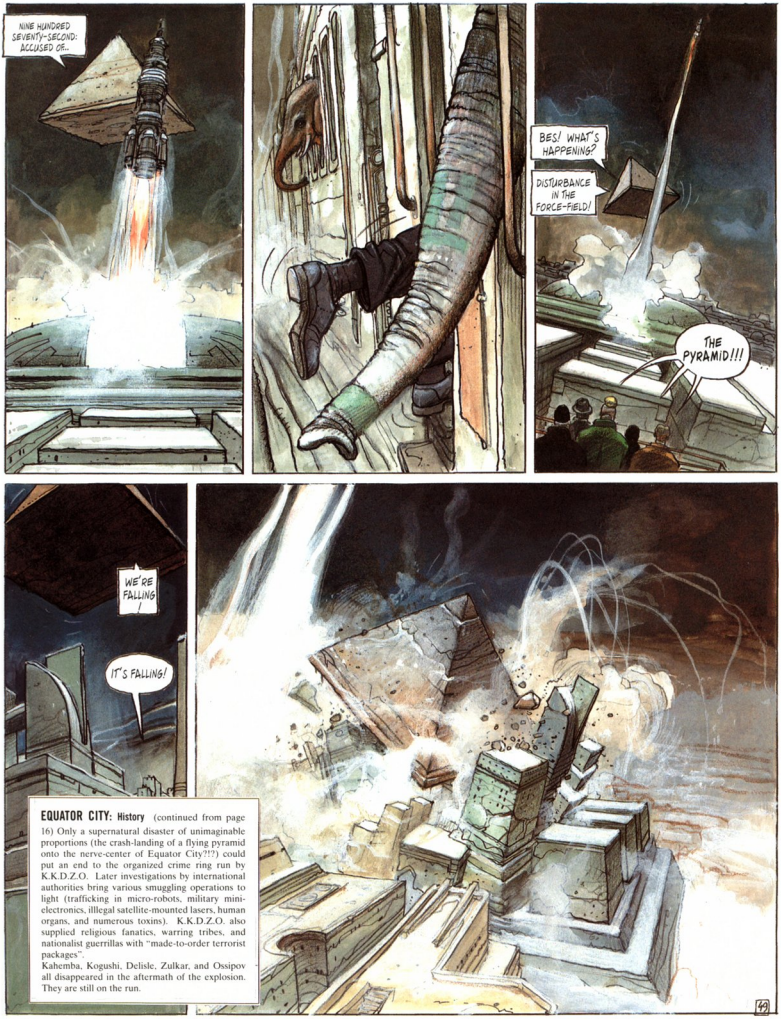
HELLO? NIKO?
ANSWER ME, NIKO! I KNOW YOU'RE THERE... I CAN HEAR YOU BREATHING... IT'S YELENA... I GOT YOUR MESSAGE. IT MADE ME VERY HAPPY.
HELLO?!

HELLO?
WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT, NIKO?
I'M RE-BUILDING MYSELF...
??... THAT'S ORIGINAL... DID JOHNELVISSON DAMAGE YOU THAT MUCH?
JOHN-WHO?
LISTEN... I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU... BUT I'M LEAVING TONIGHT. I GOT ANOTHER LEAD ON... ON THAT CASE I CAME FOR. I'M ON THE BLUE NILE EXPRESS TO DEMBI DOLO... I'VE RESERVED A COMPARTMENT FOR TWO, WITH A FLYNET... IT LEAVES AT MIDNIGHT.
..."AS AN ANGEL WITH A BEASTLY EYE I SLIDE TOWARD YOU NOISELESSLY AND RETURN AGAIN TO HOLD YOU TIGHT IN THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT."
?

-WE'VE NEUTRALIZED THE LOOPKIN VIRUS, MASTER... WE PUT HIM IN THE CENTRAL HIBERNATOR, IN PLACE OF THE BABY HIPPO. HE'S ALREADY IN A PERMANENT CRYOGENIC SLEEP. THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO FEAR... ACCORDING TO OUR PREDICTIONS, THE PYRAMID WILL NOT HANG MUCH LONGER ABOVE YOUR SKIES, NOW THAT HE'S GONE... MAY VIDYE MUKULU HEAR OUR PRAYER!

-I HOPE HE DOES! IN THE MEANTIME, LAUNCH THAT THING INTO ORBIT, AND LET'S HEAR NO MORE ABOUT IT!

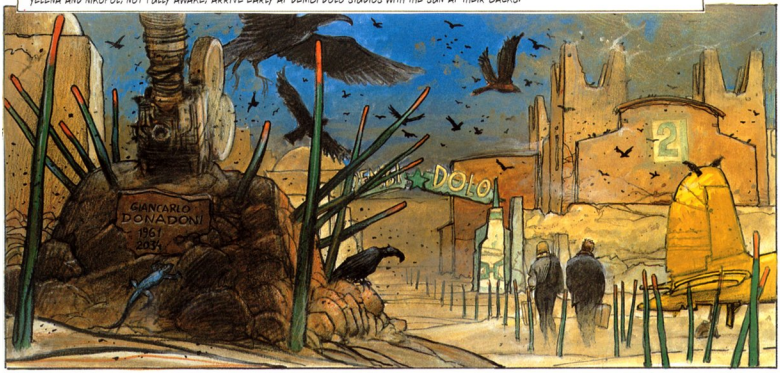

BY SEALING THE PECULIAR FATE OF NIKOPOL JUNIOR, THE DESPERATE IRRATIONALIST RONALD KAHEMBA HAS, WITHOUT KNOWING IT, SIGNED DEATH-WARRANT OF THE K.K.D.I.O. EMPIRE...


AT MIDNIGHT, DEPARTURE TIME FOR BOTH TRAIN AND SATELLITE, THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS...
NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SECOND: ACCUSED OF...
BES! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE-FIELD!
THE PYRAMID!!!
WE'RE FALLING!
IT'S FALLING!
EQUATOR CITY: History (continued from page 16) Only a supernatural disaster of unimaginable proportions (the crash-landing of a flying pyramid onto the nerve-center of Equator City?!?) could put an end to the organized crime ring run by K.K.D.Z.O. Later investigations by international authorities bring various smuggling operations to light (trafficking in micro-robots, military mini-electronics, illegal satellite-mounted lasers, human organs, and numerous toxins). K.K.D.Z.O. also supplied religious fanatics, warring tribes, and nationalist guerrillas with "made-to-order terrorist packages".
Kahemba, Kogushi, Delisle, Zulkar, and Ossipov all disappeared in the aftermath of the explosion. They are still on the run.

FULL!
FULL!
FULL!
FULL!
THIRTY-THREE FULL COMPARTMENTS LATER...
WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE "ANGEL WITH A BEASTLY EYE"...
GOOD EVENING...
K.K.D.Z.O. NOAH'S ARK is the consortium's seventh satellite. Of somewhat inferior construction, it seems that its scientific purview, besides experiments on the hibernation of living beings (animals, insects, and, we fear, even a virus), is rather limited. Its return to Earth is scheduled for the year 2064.

"YOUR EYES, IN WHICH IS SEEN NOTHING, NOR BITTER NOR SWEET— TWO COLD JEWELS WHERE GOLD AND FLAME ARE ONE AND THE SAME;"
AGAIN?
"LIKE RUNOFF FROM GLACIERS MAKING A TIDE, A WAVE'S FLOW FULL OF SURPRISES, POURING INTO YOUR SMILE SO WIDE PAST YOUR LIPS THE WATER RISES;"
DO YOU ALWAYS RECITE BAUDELAIRE WHILE MAKING LOVE?
IT'S MY FIRST TIME...
RECITING BAUDELAIRE OR MAKING LOVE?
BOTH!
YOU GOT HIT IN THE HEAD TOO HARD, NIKO... TEMPORARY AMNESIA... IT HAPPENS. I'LL HELP YOU "REBUILD YOURSELF"... TRUST ME...
WHO'S BAUDELAIRE?
LET'S LEAVE THIS PLACE!
I PROPOSE WE GO NORTH, TO CAIRO, AND BRING CHEOPS BACK TO LIFE.
GOOD IDEA, HORUS. I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD ANY LEFT IN YOU!
...AND ON THE WAY I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT MY IDEAS FOR CREATING A NEW WORLD ORDER, WITH US AT ITS HEAD!
SO WE'LL BE BLOWING UP THE U.N. THEN?
KEEP READING, BES.
THE U.N., LA COSA NOSTRA, LA COSA NEBRA, PAMYAT, AND MORE... K.K.D.Z.O. WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING!
NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY-THIRD:...
51

THE LAST MORNING OF OCTOBER 2034.
YELENA AND NIKOPOL, NOT FULLY AWAKE, ARRIVE EARLY AT DEMBI DOLO STUDIOS WITH THE SUN AT THEIR BACKS.



I'M FINISHING CUTTING THE FILM OF A FRIEND OF MINE... A FRIEND WHO DEVOTED HIS WHOLE LIFE TO LOVING THE CINEMA AND BEING SPURNED BY IT...

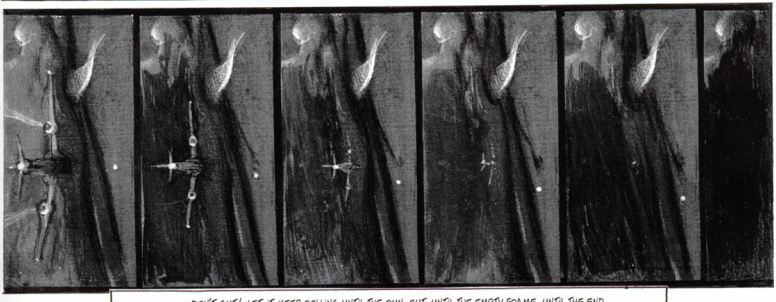
YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HIM TONIGHT, THOUGH, AS HE WALKS ALONG THE RAMPARTS...
YOU'LL BE LEAVING AFTERWARDS... THERE'S A BAD MICRO-CLIMATE MOVING UP FROM THE SOUTH... YOU'LL BE SNOWED IN IF YOU STAY HERE... I'D RATHER AVOID IT TOO... I JUST HAVE ONE MORE SHOT TO DO AT DAWN... THE GENERIC ENDING SHOT: AN AIRPLANE FLYING AWAY... YOU'LL BE ON THAT PLANE...

HE WOULDN'T REMEMBER... HE'S "REBUILDING" HIMSELF...
THAT'S LUCKY. ME TOO.
GO GET JILL AND THE PILOT. WE HAVE TO ROLL. THE STORM'S COMING.
THAT'S A STRANGE CLOUD...
"IT'S AS IF IT'S CARRYING A BUNCH OF ANIMALS...
...I SEE AN IBIS, A HAWK, A CROCODILE, A JACKAL, A RAM, A COBRA, AND A BLACK CAT..."
ARE YOU PLANNING ON STAYING HERE?
NO. I'LL FINISH DONADONI'S FILM, EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NO HOPE OF GETTING IT DISTRIBUTED, AND THEN GO BACK TO EUROPE. SOON AFTER, MY SON WILL LEARN TO LIVE ON HIS OWN. HE'LL LEAVE WITH GOSSI TO LEAD A LIFE I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT... MUCH THE BETTER FOR ME.
"RETURN WITH YOUR FANGS AND YOUR CLAWS, HANDSOME KITTEN, TO MY EVER-LOVING HEART, WHILE I RETURN TO YOUR EYES, WHERE I SAW THOSE GEMS THAT WON ME FROM THE START."
?
I'LL KEEP WORKING IN THE MOVIE BUSINESS... HAVE ANOTHER CHILD. A MORE NORMAL ONE... TRAVEL EXTENSIVELY, DOING SPECIAL REPORTS, AND MEET MY DEATH ACCIDENTALLY IN ONE OF THOSE INTERMINABLE BALKAN CONFLICTS. I'LL BE SIXTY-SEVEN, WITH NO REGRETS.
AND NOW YOUR TURN, YE- LENA.
"I'LL LIVE SEVEN HAPPY AND STORMY YEARS WITH NIKO, BUT WON'T STAY WITH HIM AFTER THAT... I'LL START A FAMILY WITH ANOTHER MAN AND CONTINUE RESEARCHING RARE GENETIC CASES... I'LL DIE VERY OLD, SURROUNDED BY CHILDREN AND ANIMALS, BUT WITH ONE HAUNTING PROFESSIONAL REGRET: OF NEVER HAVING BEEN ABLE TO APPROACH YOUR CHILD..."
AND YOU, NIKO?
ME?
WELL, SEVEN HAPPY AND STORMY YEARS WITH YOU SOUNDS LIKE ENOUGH FOR ME... AS FOR THE REST, IT'S ALL A NIGHTMARE... I LOOKED DEEP BUT MY LIFE IS A WELL WITH NO BOTTOM AND NO END...
"I AM VAMPIRE, DOWN TO THE CORE ONE OF THOSE FORGOTTEN GREAT MEN WHO WILL SUFFER, AGAIN AND AGAIN ETERNAL LAUGHTER, BUT SMILE NO MORE!"
ARE THESE GREEN STRIPES NATURAL?
53

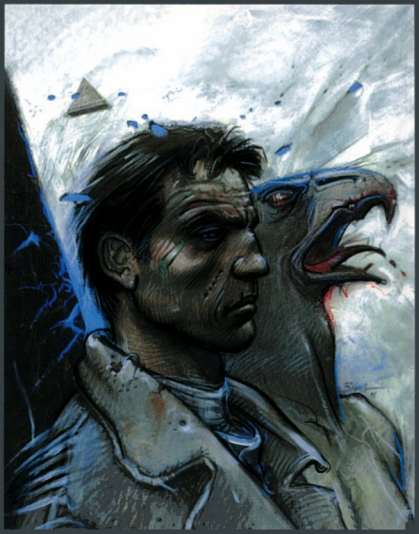
RISING EARLY, AS IF HURRIED, THE DESERT WIND MARKS 3.7 ON THE OLD EOLE SCALE.

JUST ONE... THE AIRPLANE WILL FLY OVER ONCE. AS SOON AS IT'S ABOVE US, START ROLLING AND KEEP ON GOING... I WANT TO SEE IT DISAPPEAR INTO THE SKY...

"...DONADONI WOULD HAVE LIKED THIS SHOT... I'M CERTAIN OF IT... HE WOULD HAVE LIKED THE CROWDED FRAME, WITH THE PEOPLE FLYING AWAY IN THE AIRPLANE, THE CLOUD WITH THE STRANGE TAIL, EVEN THAT BRIGHT SPOT IN THE BOTTOM THIRD OF THE SKY, WHICH MUST BE A SATELLITE... HE WOULD HAVE GONE CRAZY TRYING TO FIND THE SYMBOLISM."
-TELL ME WHEN TO CUT!



-DON'T CUT! LET IT KEEP ROLLING UNTIL THE RUN-OUT, UNTIL THE EMPTY FRAME, UNTIL THE END.



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